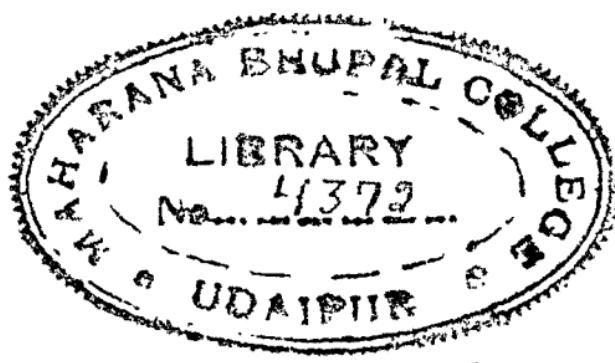


SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

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Descriptions
of feminine beauty
in English prose and poetry
collected by

CYNTHIA ASQUITH



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TO THE MEMORY
OF
GUENDOLEN CECIL

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Introduction

"nes ever written in praise
-uty, which is the ex-
-ibility, are Words-

INTRODUCTION

THIS anthology, the result of rambling, for
rather than of systematic search, makes no pretence to
to assemble all the best passages on its theme
English literature.

Since personal beauty is blessedly unstandardized, and inspires each generation to new expression, I do not think that a slender book, devoted to its praise and criticism, need fear the charge of monotony. Though choice is limited to such beauty as is perceptible to the eye, spiritual and intellectual qualities, inevitably if indirectly affecting physical appearance, must figure largely in pages where feminine loveliness is described in so many guises and in such diversity of style.

Unmitigated beauty, that not very common
offence, receives its censure, and irregularity of
feature its impassioned defence:—

"Beauty that makes holy
Earth and air may have faults from head to
feet!"

The serene and statuesque is praised and, with equal fervour, that more mobile beauty whose "features are playfellows of one another." Consolation is proffered (I wonder with how much success) to the ageing:—

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While one writer presents his heroine to us by giving full details of her appearance, others make her beauty more discernible by merely recording the emotions felt on seeing her. Some characters are physically described as though the object were to assist Scotland Yard or passport officers, and yet we fail to visualize them. Beauty is indeed often far more effectually conveyed when it is implied rather than described.

There are many figures in literature whom we seem to picture quite clearly, although, if we refer to the text, we find no actual description. Features, form, colouring—all are left to the reader's imagination. For instance Wordsworth's Highland Girl. "Behold her single in the field!" Do we not see her as distinctly as we see some well-known statue? Yet there is not one word about her appearance. We have merely been told the thoughts and emotions aroused by the sight of her.

How very seldom Shakespeare vouchsafes any detailed description! "Who is Sylvia? What is she?" What indeed? Doubtless into the mind of each listener to that song there floats the vision of a distinct but different Sylvia. "Fair" does not necessarily mean blond, and the cap of undefined but incontestable beauty and charm may be fitted as well to a dark as to a golden head. With that superb ring of confidence which must surely be the despair of other poets, Shakespeare again and again confers immortality in one single line, persuading us beyond the possibility of doubt of the supremacy of the beauty he extols. No

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piling-up of proof. No catalogue of charms. Merely the one proud, convincing statement—"Stars, stars, and all eyes else dead coals!" Unchallengeable claim! But, as to the colour of those stars, no smallest hint. Similarly with "those eyes the break, of day." Of what hue, of what shape are those "lights that do mislead the morn"?

Neither does Herrick furnish any inventory of charms, yet to the music of that clear voice his ethereal but individual Antheas, Julias, Corinnas and Dianemes still walk in beauty through the centuries.

Readers may be surprised not to find even more examples from the period vaguely described as Elizabethan. With many exceptions of astonishing beauty, I find its praise of women conventional and cloying. Hyperbole is stretched until it seems to protest, and one wearies of the long catalogues of stock and rather sugary charms. The similes are so strained and stereotyped. We sicken of coral lips, snowy bosoms, ivory hands, hair of jet or golden wire, and mouths like roses filled with snow. (It was such a relief to come across a confused poet who rivalled Thisbe's invocation of Pyramus' "cherry nose" by praising his mistress's *ebony* hand.)

We are told so much—so very much about these sixteenth-century ladies—those perpetually-besieged citadels of beauty and virtue. Yet how impersonal they remain! Nearly all of them seem made from one or two recipes—the golden or the dark. They seldom come alive, and one feels they

Introduction

could have been bought by the yard at some costly shop.

In preparing this book I found myself confronted with the question how far it was justifiable to mutilate poems and extract coveted lines from their context. The division of the book into sections naturally increased the temptation to tear single petals from lovely flowers. Greatly daring, I have even ventured to curtail a sonnet. Certain living authors spared me the discomfort of hesitancy. Quite rightly, they refused to be pruned into appositeness. I approve their decision, but the possible resentment of the defenceless dead I have ventured to incur, especially that of the immortal Anon.

In my choice I have been guided almost entirely by personal preference, and have never omitted any poem or extract because it was too universally appreciated. For the best, no amount of familiarity can ever breed contempt. Neither have I included anything I did not like, merely because it was recondite, nor, with one exception (that of a writer long since dead, whom the reader shall be left to identify) included any inferior writing for the sake of representing a particular author.

The book is roughly divided into three parts. In the first Beauty is shown in various vicissitudes: in the second her separate features are described; and the third is made up of portraits of individual characters.

C. A.

PART ONE

*She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies:
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.*

BYRON

*Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?*

MARLOWE

“I DID BUT SEE HER PASSING BY”

THERE is a Lady sweet and kind,
Was never face so pleased my mind;
I did but see her passing by,
And yet I love her till I die.

Her gesture, motion and her smiles,
Her wit, her voice my heart beguiles,
Beguiles my heart, I know not why,
And yet I love her till I die.

Anon.

Now I can see what Helen was:
Men cannot see this woman pass
And be not stirred; as Summer's breeze
Sets leaves in battle on the trees.
A woman moving gracefully,
With golden hair enough for three,
Which mercifully is not loose,
But lies in coils to her head close;
With lovely eyes so dark and blue,
So deep, so warm, they burn me through.
I see men follow her, as though
Their homes were where her steps should go.

She walks in Beauty

She seemed as sent to our cold race
For fear the beauty of her face
Made Paradise in flames like Troy—
I could have gazed all day with joy.
In fancy I could see her stand
Before a savage, fighting band,
And make them with her words and looks
Exchange their spears for shepherds' crooks.

W. H. Davies

DEATH lies in wait for you, you wild thing in the wood.

Shy-footed beauty dear, half seen, half understood,
Glimpsed in the beech-wood dim in the dropping fir,

Shy like a faun and sweet and Beauty's minister,
A wonder, a delight, a paleness passing soon,
Only a moment held, only an hour seen,
Only an instant known in all that life has been,
One instant in the sand to drink that gush of grace
The beauty of your way, the marvel of your face.

John Masefield

TO A LADY SEEN FOR A FEW MOMENTS AT VAUXHALL

TIME's sea hath been five years at his slow ebb,
Long hours have to and fro let creep the sand,
Since I was tangled in thy beauty's web,
And snared by the ungloving of thy hand.
And yet I never look on midnight sky,
But I behold thine eyes' well memory'd light;

"I did but see her passing by"

I cannot look upon the roses' dye,
But to thy cheek my soul doth take its flight;
I cannot look on any budding flower,
But my fond ear, in fancy at thy lips
And hearkening for a love-sound, doth devour
Its sweets in the wrong sense:—Thou dost eclipse
Every delight with sweet remembering,
And grief unto my darling joys dost bring.

Keats, 1795-1821

SHE was a phantom of delight
When first she gleam'd upon my sight,
A lovely apparition sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair,
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn;
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle and waylay.

Wordsworth, 1770-1850

As one, turning in a crowd, sees in a face a sudden
beauty and cannot for the moment look away, so I
saw you. What was it drew me then, your shy
grace, your eyes with wonder in them, the very
knowledge that your thoughts were far from me? I
cannot tell you. But turn your head, again, once, for
a moment, that I may see you, that my heart may
stand still. For the crowd presses upon us always,
and in a little while you will be lost.

Mad. Gibbon

She walks in Beauty

ATTIRE

My Love in her attire doth show her wit
It doth so well become her;
For every season she hath dressings fit,
For Winter, Spring and Summer.
No beauty she does miss
When all her robes are on:
But Beauty's self she is
When all her robes are gone.

Anon.

WHENAS in silks my Julia goes
Then, then, methinks how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes!

Next when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free,
O how that glittering taketh me!

Herrick, 1591-1674

THE very colours of her coat
Were better than good news.

G. K. Chesterton

Attire

OLD Man, your pearls are not for us,
Your rubies die too soon:
Have you the pearls of Sirius,
Or opals of the moon?

I do not ask for other gems;
Flashing with frost and fire,
The sky's undying diadems
Shall be my Love's attire!

Emeralds, that into rubies melt
Upon the brow of night,
I've taken from Orion's belt
To make her girdle bright.

On highways of the albatross
I scale the purple air
For sapphires of the Southern Cross
And wreath them in her hair.

Her robe it is the morning sky,
Her veil it is the West;
So robed, so veiled my love will fly,
When I am gone to rest.

Yet all the rays of all the moons,
The lights of all the skies,
Are pale beside the dim lagoons
Of those mysterious eyes.

Herbert Asquith

She walks in Beauty

THE DRESSING-TABLE OF MARIE-ANTOINETTE

THIS was her table, these her trim outspread
Brushes and trays and porcelain cups for red;
Here sat she, while her women tired and curled
The most unhappy head in all the world.

J. B. B. Nichols

I THINK and think; yet still I fail—
Why does this lady wear a veil?
Why thus elect to mask her face
Beneath that dainty web of lace?
The tip of a small nose I see,
And two red lips set curiously
Like twin-born cherries on one stem,
And yet she has netted even them.
Her eyes, it's plain, survey with ease
Whatever to glance upon they please.
Yet, whether hazel, grey, or blue,
Or that even lovelier lilac hue,
I cannot guess: why—why deny
Such beauty to the passer-by?
Out of a bush a nightingale
May expound his song; beneath that veil
A happy mouth no doubt can make
English sound sweeter for its sake.
But then, why muffle in, like this,
What every blossomy wind would kiss?
Why in that little night disguise
A daybreak face, those starry eyes?

Walter de la Mare

Attire

THE feathers decked her with a quaint disdaine
Like Juno's bird in pomp of spotted traine.

Elizabethan

LAWN as white as driven snow;
Cyprus black as e'er was crow;
Gloves as sweet as damask roses;
Masks for faces and for noses;
Bugle bracelet, necklace amber,
Perfume for a lady's chamber;
Golden quoifs and stomachers,
For my lads to give their dears:
Pins and poking-sticks of steel,
What maids lack from head to heel:
Come buy of me, come; come buy, come buy;
Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry:
Come buy.

Shakespeare, 1564-1616

To win you there is not a precious stone I would leave unturned. Conceive a "parure" all of white stones—diamonds, white sapphires, white topazes, tourmalines. Another, of rubies and amethysts, set in gold filigree. Rings that once were poison-combs on Florentine singers. Red roses for your hair—every petal a hollowed ruby. Amulets and apt-buckles, zones and fillets.

Max Beerbohm

She walks in Beauty

PRAISE OF ART

TOP-KNOTS

’T is no small art to give direction
How to suit knots to each complexion,
How to adorn the breast and head
With blue, white, cherry pink or red.
As the morn rises, so that day
Wear purple, sky-colour, or gray:
Your black in Lent, your green in May,
Your filamot when leaves decay.
All colours in the summer shine,
The nymphs should be like gardens fine.

William King, 1663-1712

CONCEITEDLY dress her, and be assigned
By you fit place for every flower and jewel,
 Make her for love fit fuel
As gay as Flora, and as rich as Ind.

Donne, 1573-1631

AND now, unveil’d the toilet stands display’d;
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First rob’d in white the nymph intense adores,
With head uncover’d the cosmetic pow’rs:
A heav’ly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eye she rears;
Th’ inferior priestess at her altar’s side,
Trembling, begins the sacred rites of pride.

Praise of Art

Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil
And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transform'd to combs, the speckl'd and the white:
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace
And calls forth all the wonders of her face:
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy Sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair.

Pope, 1688-1744

No splendour 'neath the sky's proud dome
But serves for her familiar wear;
The far-fetch'd diamond finds its home
Flashing and smouldering in her hair;
For her the seas their pearls reveal;
Art and strange lands her pomp supply
With purple, chrome and cochineal,
Ochre and lapis lazuli;
The worl' in its golden woof presents;
Whatever runs, flies, dives or delves,
All doss for her their ornaments,
Which suit her better than themselves.

Cowenry Patmore, 1823-1896

She walks in Beauty

THE dress, so proper was it to little Pearl, seemed an effluence, or inevitable development and outward manifestation of her character, no more to be separated from her than the many-hued brilliancy from a butterfly's wing, or the painted glory from the leaf of a bright flower.

Hawthorne, 1807-1864

THE bride being attired in a gown of sheep russet, and a kirtle of fine worsted, her hair attired with a billiment of gold, and her hair as yellow as gold hanging down behind her, which was curiously combed and pleated, according to the manner in those days. . . . As for the silken ribands they may have been of Drakes colour or Ladies blush or Gozelinge colour or Marigold or Isabel or Peas porridge tawny or Popingay blew or Lusty gallant, but they were certainly not Judas colour, Devil in the hedge, or Dead Spaniard.

Thomas Deloney, 1543(?) - 1607(?)

PRAISE OF SIMPLICITY

STILL to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be powder'd, still perfumed:
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all th' adulteries of art;
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

Ben Jonson, 1573-1637

A FAIR and happy milkmaid is a country wench,
that is so far from making herself beautiful by art
that one look of hers is able to put all face physic
out of countenance.

Sir Thomas Overbury, 1581-1613

She walks in Beauty

I wish her beauty,
That owes not all its duty
To gaudy tire, or glist'ning shoe-tie,—

Something more than
Taffeta or tissue can,
Or rampant feather, or rich fan,—

More than the spoil
Of shop, or silkworm's toil,
Or a bought blush, or a set smile;

A face that's best
By its own beauty dress'd.
And can alone commend the rest,—

A face made up
Out of no other shop
Than what Nature's white hand sets ope;

A cheek where youth
And blood with pen of Truth
Write what their reader sweetly ru'th—

A cheek where grows
More than a morning rose,
Which to no box its being owes;

Lips where all day
A lover's kiss may play,
Yet carry nothing thence away.

Crashaw, 1613(?)-1649

Praise of Simplicity

Why bears your neck a golden chain?
Did Nature make your hair in vain
Of gold most pure and fine?
With gems why do you shine?
They, neighbours to your eyes,
Show but like phosphor when the sun
doth rise.

Cowley, 1618-1667

You, Damon, covet to possess
The nymph that sparkles in her dress;
Would rustling silks and hoops invade,
And clasp an armful of brocade.

Such raise the price of your delight
Who purchase both their red and white,
And, pirate-like, surprise your heart
With colours of adulterate art.

Me, Damon, me, the maid enchanters
Whose cheeks the hand of nature paints;
A modest blush adorns her face,
Her air an unaffected grace.

No art she knows, or seeks to know;
No charm to wealthy pride will owe;
No gems, no gold she needs to wear;
She shines intrinsically fair.

Bedingfield, 1760-1789

She walks in Beauty

As lamps burn silent, with unconscious light,
So modest ease in beauty shines most bright;
Unaiming charms with edge resistless fall,
And she, who means no mischief, does it all.

Aaron Hill, 1685-1750

WHETHER Stella's eyes are found
Fix'd on earth or glancing round,
If her face with pleasure glow,
If she sigh at others' woe,
If her easy air express
Conscious worth or soft distress,
Stella's eyes and air and face
Charm with undiminish'd grace;
If on her we see display'd
Pendent gems and rich brocade;
If her chintz with less expense
Flows in easy negligence;
Still she lights the conscious flame,
Still her charms appear the same;
If she sit or if she move
Still we love and still approve.
Vain the casual, transient glance
Which alone can please by chance,
Beauty which depends on art,
Which demands the toilet's aid,
Pendent gems and rich brocade.
I alone those charms can prize
Which from constant nature rise,
Which nor circumstance nor dress
E'er can make or more or less.

Dr. Johnson, 1709-1784

SOUR GRAPES?

A WHITELY wanton with a velvet brow
With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes!
Love's Labour's Lost

THY beauty is a painted skin
For fools to see their faces in.
Thine eyes that some as stars esteem
From whence themselves, they say, take light,
Like to the foolish fire, I deem,
That leads men to their death by night.

Anon.

TUR whole wench--how complete so e'r was but
A specious baite, a soft, sly tempting slut;
A pleasing witch, a living death; a faire
Thriving disease, a fresh infectious aire;
A pretious plague; a surie sweetly drawne
Wild fire laid up and finely dressed in lawne.

Vaughan, 1622-1695

'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream.

As You Like It

She walks in Beauty

STABBED with a white wench's black eye.

Love's Labour's Lost

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak,—yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go,—
My mistress when she walks, treads on the ground;
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied beyond compare.

Shakespeare, 1564-1616

THE will she robbeth from the wit:
The sense from Reason's lore:
She is delightful in the rind,
Corrupted in the core.

Southwell, 1561-1595

PHYLLIS more white than lilies,
More fair than Amaryllis,
More cold than chrystal fountain,
More hard than craggy rock or stony mountain.

Anon.

Sour Grapes?

BRIGHT as the day, and like the morning fair
Such Chloe is and common as the air.

George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, 1667-1735

A THOUSAND Cherubim fly in your looks;
And hearts in legions melt upon their view.
But gorgeous covers wall up filthy books
Be it a sin to say that so your face does you?

Philip Rosseter, 1575(?)-1623

APRIL is in my Mistress face,
And July in her eyes hath place:
Within her bosom is September;
But in her heart a cold December.

Anon.

LOVELY of hair and breast and face,
Utterly lost to Christian grace,
How will you lift that bankrupt head
When all the butterfly beauty's dead?

Norman Gale

FAULTLESS faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.

Tennyson, 1809-1892

She walks in Beauty

BEAUTY IN MOVEMENT

DELILAH

But who is this? what thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems
That, so bedecked, ornate and gay,
Comes this way sailing.
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus, bound for the isles
Of Javan or Gadire,
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails filled and streamers waving,
Courted by all the winds that hold them play.
An amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind?

Milton, 1608-1674

MILLAMANT

HERE she comes i' faith full Sail, with her Fan
spread and Streamers out, and a Shoal of Fools
for Tenders.

Congreve, 1670-1729

FOR look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground!

Much Ado about Nothing

Beauty in Movement

I stood and saw my mistress dance,
Silent, and with so fix'd an eye,
Some might suppose me in a trance;
But being asked why,
By one that knew I was in love,
I could not but impart
My wonder, to behold her move
So nimbly with a marble heart.

James Shirley, 1596-1666

HERE she was wont to go, and here and here!
Just where those daisies, pinks, and violets grow:
The world may find the spring by following her;
For other print her airy steps ne'er left:
Her treading would not bend a blade of grass,
Or shake the downy blow-ball from his stalk;
But like the soft west wind she shot along:
And where she went, the flowers took thickest root
As she had sowed them with her odorous foot.

Ben Jonson, 1573-1637

My lady walks as I have watch'd a swan
Swim where a glory on the water shone:
Where ends of willow-branches ride
Quivering in the flowing tide,
By the deep river's side.

Fresh beauties, howso'er she moves, are stirr'd;
As the sunn'd bosom of a humming bird
At each pant lifts some fiery hue,
Fierce gold, bewildering green or blue—
The same, yet ever

Wheeler, 1596-1666

She walks in Beauty

... WHEN you dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that; more still, still so, and own
No other function. *Winter's Tale*

KERCHIEF'D head and chin she darts between her
tulips

Streaming like a willow grey in arrowy rain:
Some bend beaten cheek to gravel, and their angel
She will be; she lifts them, and on she speeds again.
Black the driving rain-cloud breasts the iron gate-
way:

She is forth to cheer a neighbour lacking mirth
So when sky and grass met rolling dumb for
thunder.

Saw I once a white dove, sole light of earth.

George Meredith, 1828-1909

SHE had the glory of the racing cutter full sail on a
winning breeze. *Ibid.*

HAZEL was a flower in a gale when she danced, a
slim poplar tremulous and swaying in the dawn, a
young beech assenting to the winds' will.

Mary Webb

YOU wear the morning like your dress
And are with mastery crown'd;
When as you walk your loveliness
Goes shining all around.

Hilaire Belloc

BEAUTY IN BLUSHES

If blush thou must, then blush thou through
A lawn, that thou mayst look
As purest pearls, or pebbles do
When peeping through a brook.

Herrick, 1591-1674

So look the mornings when the sun
Paints them with fresh vermillion;
So cherries blush, and Catherine pears,
And apricots, in youthful years;
So corals look more lovely red,
And rubies lately polished;
So purest diaper doth shine
Stained by the beams of claret wine;
As Julia looks, when she doth dress
Her either cheek with bashfulness.

Herrick

Look how a Comet at the first appearing
Drawes all men's eyes with wonder to behold it,
So did the blazing of my blush appeare,
To mazc the world, that holds such sights so deere.

S. Daniel, 1562-1619

She walks in Beauty

BENEATH these rays of her bright eyes
Beautie's rich bed of blushes lies,
Blushes which lightning-like come on,
Yet stay not to be gaz'd upon,
But leave the lilies of her skin
As fair as ever, and run in
Like swift salutes—which dull paint scorn
Twixt a white noon and crimson morn.

Vaughan, 1621-1695

SMILES AND TEARS

... You have seen

Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
Were like a better way: those happy smilets,
That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief
Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved,
If all could so become it.

King Lear

O FATHER what a hell of witchcraft lies
In the small orb of one particular tear.

Shakespeare, The Lover's Complaint

Tur sea of melting pearl which some call tears.

Two Gentlemen of Verona

Fresher than morning flowers which shew,
As thou in tears dost, best in dew.

Vaughan, 1621-1635

She walks in Beauty

WHEN sorrow would be seen
In her brightest majesty
—For she is a Queen—
Then is she drest by none but thee:
Then and only then she wears
Her richest pearls—I mean thy tears.

Not in the evening's eyes
When they red with weeping are
For the Sun that dies,
Sits Sorrow with a face so fair.
Nowhere but here did ever meet
Sweetness so sad, sadness so sweet.

Richard Crashaw, 1613(?)-1649

A SMILE of hers was like an act of grace.

Hartley Coleridge, 1796-1849

THE smile, that rests to play
Upon her lip, foretells
What musical array
Tricks her sweet syllables.

Bridges, 1844-1930

WHAT means the sad, slow, silver smile?

Browning, 1812-1889

I TELL her she is lovely and she laughs,
Shy laughter altogether lovely too:
Knowing, perhaps, that it was true before
And, when she laughs, that it is still more true.

Monk Gibbon

BEAUTY IN SORROW

I saw my Lady weep,
And Sorrow proud to be advancéd so
In those fair eyes where all perfections keep.
Her face was full of woe;
But such a woe (believe me) as wins more hearts
Than Mirth can do with her enticing parts.

Sorrow was there made fair
And Passion wise; Tears a delightful thing;
Silence beyond all speech, a wisdom rare;
She made her sighs to sing,
And all things with so sweet a sadness move
As made my heart at once both grieve and love.

Anon.

. . . Go, thou Lily,
Thou sweetly-drooping flower; go silver swan
And sing thine own sad requiem.

Beaumont and Fletcher

How beautiful, if Sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.

Keats, 1795-1821

She walks in Beauty

SIGHS

In those mournful eyes

So put on visibilities;

As viewless ether turns, in deep on deep, to dyes.

Francis Thompson, 1857-1907

THE small fair face between the darks of hair,
I used to liken, when I saw her first,
To a point of moonlit water down a well:
The low brow, the frank space between the eyes,
Which always had the brown pathetic look
Of a dumb creature who had been beaten once
And never since was easy with the world.
Ah, ah—now I remember perfectly
Those eyes, to-day—how over large they seemed,
As if some patient passionate despair
(Like a coal dropt and forgot on tapestry
Which slowly burns a widening circle out)
Had burnt them larger, larger.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1806-1861

OPHELIA

THERE is a beauty past all weeping now
In that sweet, crooked mouth, that vacant smile;
Only a lonely grey in those mad eyes,
Which never on earth shall learn their loneliness.

Walter de la Mare

BEAUTY ASLEEP

How bravely thou becomest thy bed, fresh Lily,
And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!
But kiss; one kiss! rubies unparagon'd,
How dearly they do't! 'Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus: the flame o' the taper
Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids,
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied
Under these windows, white, and azure-laced
With blue of heaven's own tinct. *Cymbeline*

Without the bed her other fair hand was,
On the green coverlet! whose perfect white
Show'd like an April daisy on the grass. . . .

Her eyes, like marigolds, had sheath'd their light,
And canopied in darkness sweetly lay,
Till they might open to adorn the day.

Shakespeare, 1564-1616

Wivv, Jenny, you're asleep at last!—
Asleep, poor Jenny, hard and fast,—
So young and soft and tired; so fair,
With chin thus nestled in your hair,
Mouth quiet, eyelids almost blue
As if some sky of dreams shone through!

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828-1882

She walks in Beauty

O LADY bright! can it be right—
This window open to the night?
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully—so fearfully—
Above the closed and fringed lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid.
O, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou, dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress,
Strange above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness!

Edgar Allan Poe, 1809-1849

SHE lay upon one side, all curled and sunken, her brow upon one arm, the other stretched out, limp and dimpled. Her young body like a thing thrown down had scarce a mark of life. Her breathing stirred her not . . . the figure in that touching freedom of forgetfulness surprised him; the flush of slumber became her like a flower.

R. L. Stevenson, 1850-1894

UNDER yonder beech-tree single on the green-sward,
Couched with her arms behind her golden head,
Knees and tresses folded to slip and ripple idly,
Lies my young love sleeping in the shade.

Meredith, 1828-1909

Beauty Asleep

WHEN she sleeps, her soul, I know,
Goes a wanderer on the air,
Wings where I may never go,
Leaves her lying, still and fair,
Waiting, empty, laid aside,
Like a dress upon a chair . . .
This I know, and yet I know
Doubts that will not be denied.

For if the soul be not in place
What has laid trouble in her face?
And, sits there nothing ware and wise
Behind the curtains of her eyes,
What is it, in the self's eclipse,
Shadows, soft and passingly,
About the corners of her lips,
The smile that is essential she?
And if the spirit be not there
Why is fragrance in the hair?

Rupert Brooke, 1887-1915

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

THE scent of bramble fills the air,
Amid her folded sheets she lies,
The gold of evening in her hair,
The blue of morn shut in her eyes.

How many a changing moon hath lit
The unchanging roses of her face!
Her mirror ever broods on it
In silver stillness of the days.

She walks in Beauty

Oft flits the moth on filmy wings
Into his solitary lair;
Shrill evensong the cricket sings
From some still shadow in her hair.

In heat, in snow, in wind, in flood,
She sleeps in lovely loneliness,
Half folded like an April bud
On winter-haunted trees.

Walter de la Mare

BEAUTY'S TRANSIENCE

TO DIANEME

SWEET, be not proud of those two eyes
Which, starlike, sparkle in their skies;
Nor be you proud that you can see
All hearts your captives, yours yet free;
Be you not proud of that rich hair
Which wantons with the love-sick air;
Whenas that ruby which you wear,
Sunk from the tip of your soft ear,
Will last to be a precious stone
When all your world of beauty's gone.

Herrick, 1591-1674

Know, lady, you have but your day:
And time will come when you shall wear
Such frost and snow upon your hair;
And when (though long, it come to pass)
You question with your looking glass;
And in that sincere chrystal seek,
But find no rose-bud in your cheek:
Nor any bed to give the show
Where such a rare carnation grew.

Herrick

She walks in Beauty

LIFE is the body's light, which once declining,
Those crimson clouds i' the cheek and lips leave
shining.

So, when Death comes, fresh tinctures lose their
place,
And dismal darkness then does smutch the face.

Herrick, 1591-1674

THOUGH you are in your shining days
Voices among the crowd
And new friends busy with your praise,
Be not unkind or proud,
But think about old friends the most:
Time's bitter flood will rise,
Your beauty perish and be lost
For all eyes but these eyes.

W. B. Yeats

TIME doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in Beauty's brow.

Shakespeare, 1564-1616

THE air hath starv'd the roses in her cheeks,
And pinch'd the lily-tincture of her face.

Two Gentlemen of Verona

Now Helen lives alone in Fame
And Cleopatra's but a name:
Time must indent that heavenly Brow
And thou must be what they are now.

W. Browne, 1689-1745

Beauty's Transience

WALK in beauty. Vaunt thy rose,
Flaunt thy transient loveliness.

Walter de la Mare

FROM wave and star and flower
Some effluence rare
Was lent thee, a divine but transient dower;
Thou yield'st it back from eyes and lips and hair
To wave and star and flower.

William Watson

THOSE curious locks so aptly twined,
Whose every hair a soul doth bind,
Will change their auburn hue and grow
White and cold as winter's snow.

T. Carew, 1595-1639

AND whilst with time we trifling stand
To practice antique graces,
Age with a pale and withered hand
Draws furrows in our faces.

Drayton, 1563-1631

SWIFT speedy Time, feathered with flying hours
Dissolves the beauty of the fairest brow.

Daniel, 1572-1619

She walks in Beauty

No rose but fades: no glory but must pass,
No hue but dims; no precious silk but frets.
Her beauty must go underneath the grass,
Under the long roots of the violets.

John Masefield

BEAUTY is but a flower,
Which wrinkles will devour;
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair,
Dust hath closed Helen's eye;
I am sick, I must die.

Nashe, 1567-1601

WHILE roses are so red,
While lilies are so white,
Shall a woman exalt her face
Because it gives delight?
She's not so sweet as a rose,
A lily's straighter than she,
And if she were as red or white
She'd be but one of three.

Whether she flush in love's summer
Or in its winter grow pale,
Whether she flaunt her beauty
Or hide it away in a veil,
Be she red or white
And stand she erect or bowed,
Time will win the race he runs with her,
And hide her away in a shroud.

Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894

Beauty's Transience

HERE lies a most beautiful lady,
Light of step and heart was she.
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever was in the West Countree.

But Beauty vanishes: Beauty passes
However rare, rare it be.
And when I crumble, who shall remember
This Lady of the West Countree.

Walter de la Mare

She walks in Beauty

BEAUTY IN YOUTH

IT is a sweet delicious morn
Where day is breeding, never born.
It is a meadow yet unshorn,
Which thousand flowers do adorn.

Campion, 1567(?) - 1619

STEPPING down the hill with her fair companions,
Arm in arm, all against the raying West,
Boldly she sings to the merry tune she marches,
Brave is her shape, and sweeter unpossessed.
Sweeter for she is what my heart first awaking
Whispered the world was; morning light is she.
Love that so desires would fain keep her changeless;
Fain would fling the net and fain have her free.

Meredith, 1828-1909

SHE walks, and the very earth smiles beneath her feet. Something comes with her that is more than mortal—witness the yearning welcome that stretches towards her from all. As the sunshine lights up the aspect of things, so her presence sweetens the very flowers like dew . . . from all enchanted things of heaven and earth this preciousness has been drawn

Beauty in Youth

... all the wild woods hold of beauty; all the broad hill's thyme and freedom, thrice a hundred years repeated. A hundred years of cowslips, blue-bells, violets; purple spring and golden autumn; sunshine, shower, and dewy mornings. . . . Thence she sprang, and the world yearns toward her beauty as to flowers that are past. The loveliness of seventeen is centuries old.

Richard Jefferies, 1848-1887

No autumn nor no age ever approach
This heavenly piece; which nature having wrought,
She lost her needle, and did then despair
Ever to work so lively and so fair!

Massinger, 1583-1640

Your youth is like a water-wetted stone,
A pebble by the living sea made rare,
Bright with a beauty that is not its own.

Behold it flushed like flowers newly blown,
Miraculously fresh beyond compare—
Your youth is like a water-wetted stone.

For when the triumphing tide recedes, alone
The stone will stay, and shine no longer there
Bright with a beauty that is not its own.

Remember this before your hour is flown;
O you, who are so glorious, beware!
Your youth is like a water-wetted stone
Bright with a beauty that is not its own.

Frances Cornford

She walks in Beauty

YOUR charms in harmless childhood lay,
Like metals in the mine;
Age from no face took more away
Than youth conceal'd in thine.

Sir Charles Sedley, 1639-1701

FAIRE as unshaded Light; or as the Day
In its first birth, when all the year was May;
Sweet, as the Altar's smoak, or as the new
Unfolded Bud, sweld by the early dew;
Smooth, as the face of waters first appear'd
Ere tides began to strive, or winds were heard.

Sir William Davenant, 1606-1668

IF one could have that little head of hers
Painted upon a background of pale gold,
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!
No shade encroaching on the matchless mould
Of those two lips which should be opening soft
In the pure profile, not as when she laughs,
For that spoils all: but rather as if aloft
Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its staff's
Burthen of honey-coloured buds to kiss
And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this.
Then her little neck, three fingers might surround
How it should waver on the pale gold ground
Up to the fruit-shaped perfect chin it lifts!

Browning, 1812-1889

Beauty in Youth

WHAT month is yours? Not June or hot July,
No snapdragons with sunlight in their fangs;
Nor when on summer midnight thunder hangs
And in the crimson-hearted peony
The first slow storm-drop falls: no sultriness
Will ever mask the vision of those eyes!
Nor June with all her roses has the dress
That most befits you, nor October skies,
For all the golden leaf they float to earth,
Nor winter's frosted tracery; but yours
Is April still unsading even to May,
The daffodil through which the young sun pours,
The first breath of the spring, first love, first birth
Of all the wonder time can take away.

Herbert Asquith

She walks in Beauty

BEAUTY IN AGE

ONE that is ever kind said yesterday:
"Your well-belovèd's hair has threads of grey,
And little shadows come about her eyes;
Time can but make it easier to be wise
Though now it seems impossible, and so
All that you need is patience."

Heart cries, "No.

I have not a crumb of comfort, not a grain.
Time can but make her beauty over again:
Because of that great nobleness of hers
The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs,
Burns but more clearly. O she had not these ways
When all the wild summer was in her gaze."
O heart! O heart! if she'd but turn her head,
You'd know the folly of being comforted.

W. B. Yeats

ALTHOUGH crowds gathered once if she but showed
her face,
And even old men's eyes grew dim, this hand alone,
Like some last courtier at a gypsy camping-place
Babbling of fallen majesty, records what's gone.

Beauty in Age

The lineaments, a heart that laughter has made sweet,

These, these remain, but I record what's gone. A crowd

Will gather and not know it walks the very street
Whercon a thing once walked that seemed a burn-
ing cloud.

W. B. Yeats

So have I known, in some fair woman's face,
While viewless yet was Time's more gross imprint,
The first, faint, hesitant, elusive hint
Of that invasion of the vandal years
Seem deeper beauty than youth's cloudless grace,
Wake subtler dreams, and touch me nigh to tears.

William Watson

No spring, nor summer's beauty hath such grace
As I have seen in one autumnal face. . . .
Call not these wrinkles graves; if graves they were,
They were Love's graves or else he is nowhere.

Donne, 1573-1631

VENUS take my votive glass;
Since I am not what I was,
What from this day I shall be
Venus never let me see.

Matthew Prior, 1664-1721

An old age serene and bright
And lovely as a Lapland night.

Wordsworth, 1770-1850

She walks in Beauty

WHAT Alice thought might be a smile crinkled, as it were, across the exquisite web of wrinkles on her face. On her acorn-shaped head rose a high lace and silver cap resembling the gown she wore; and silk mittens concealed her wrists. She was so small that Alice had to bend almost double over her fingers.

And when she was seated in her chair it was as if a large doll sat there—but a marvellous doll that had voice, thought, senses and motion beyond any human artificer's wildest fancy. The eyes in this dry wizened-up countenance—of a much fainter blue than the palest forget-me-not—steadily continued to look at Alice. . . .

Like half-transparent glass the aged eyes continued to survey her, the bird-like hands crossed daintily over the square lace handkerchief held in the narrow lap. . . .

The acorn head drew down into its laces like a snail into its shell. Until this moment Alice might have been conversing with an exquisite image—the glittering eyes, the bird-claw hands, the voice from afar. But now it seemed life itself was stirring in it. . . .

Alice had been richer in dolls than most children. But no single one of them had shown a face so utterly still and placid as that now leaning gently aside in its lace and silver cap and mantle. There was no expression whatever on its features. No faintest smile; no shadow of a frown. And yet, the tiny wrinkles all over it, crooking down even from the brows over the eyelids, gave it the appearance of an exquisitely figured map. *Walter de la Mare*

Beauty in Age

NEVER a careworn wife but shows,
If a joy suffuse her,
Something beautiful to those
Patient to peruse her.

Some one charm the world unknowns
Precious to a muser,
Haply what, ere years were foes,
Moved her mate to choose her.

But, be it a hint of rose
That an instant hues her,
Or some early light or pose
Wherewith thought renews her—
Seen by him, at full, ere woes
Practised to abuse her—
Sparely comes it, swiftly goes,
Time again subdues her.

Thomas Hardy, 1840-1928

WHEN you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep.

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true;
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars. *W. B. Yeats*

She walks in Beauty

BEAUTY IN DEATH

COVER her face. Mine eyes dazzle.
She died young.

Webster, 1580(?)-1625(?)

SHUT are the day-bright eyes that made me see!
Greene, 1560-1592

O BONNIE, bonnie was her mouth;
And cherry were her cheeks;
And clear, clear was her yellow hair,
Whereon the red blude dreips.

Then wi' his spear he turned hir owre,
O gin her face was wan;
He said, ye are the first that eir,
I wishit alive again.

He turned her owr and owr again,
O gin her skin was whyte;
I might hae spared that bonny face,
To ha been some man's delyte.
ws

xquisite.

Anon.

Beauty in Death

DEATH, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
Thou art not conquered; Beauty's Ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy checks
And Death's pale flag is not advanced there.

Romeo and Juliet

YOUR beauty, ripe and calm and fresh
As eastern summers are,
Must now forsaking time and flesh
Add light to some small star.

Davenant, 1606-1668

Is she fair now as she lies?
Once she was fair;
Meet queen for any kingly king,
With gold-dust on her hair.
Now there are poppies in her locks,
White poppies she must wear;
Must wear a veil to shroud her face
And the want graven there:
Or is the hunger fed at length,
Cast off the care.

Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894

Her face was like an April morn,
Clad in a wintry cloud;
And clay-cold was her lily hand,
That held her sable shroud.

David Mallet, 1705-1765

She walks in Beauty

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Glad in a wintry cloud;
And clay-cold was her lily hand,
That held her sable shroud.

David Mallet, 1705-1765

She walks in Beauty

GOLD, cold; 'tis all in vain; those lustrous eyes
Will never beam again beneath the stars;
Darkened for ever; and those wan, dead lips:
They'll put her in the earth and let the world,
The pitiless bad world, tread o'er her beauty.

Beddoes, 1803-1849

My love looks like a girl to-night,
But she is old.

The plaits that lie along her pillow
Are not gold,
But threaded with filigree silver
And uncanny cold.

She looks like a young maiden, since her brow
Is smooth and fair;
Her cheeks are very smooth, her eyes are closed.
She sleeps a rare,
Still, winsome sleep, so still, and so composed.

Nay, but she sleeps like a bride, and dreams her
dreams
Of perfect things.
She lies at last, the darling, in the shape of her
dreams,
And her dead mouth sings,
By its shape, like thrushes in clear evenings.

D. H. Lawrence, 1885-1930

Beauty in Death

HERE a solemn fast we keep,
While all beauty lies asleep,
Hushed be all things, no noise here,
But the toning of a tear;
Or the sigh of such as bring
Cowslips for her covering.

Herrick, 1591-1674

SHE was most like a rose when it flushes rarest,
She was most like a lily when it blows fairest,
She was most like a violet sweetest on the bank:
Now she's only like the snow, cold and blank
After the sun sank.

Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894

Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!
Pale as thy smock, when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl!
Even like thy chastity.

Othello

Now boast thee, Death, in thy possession lies
A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close;
And golden Phœbus never be beheld
Of eyes again so royal. Thy crown's awry.

Antony and Cleopatra

She walks in Beauty

. . . SHE looks like sleep—
As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.

Antony and Cleopatra

THEY stood silently looking upon Eustacia, who as she lay still in death eclipsed all her living phases. Pallor did not include all the quality of her complexion, which seemed more than whiteness. The expression of her finely carved mouth was pleasant, as if a sense of dignity had just compelled her to leave off speaking. Eternal rigidity had seized upon it in a momentary transition between fervour and resignation. Her black hair was looser now than either of them had ever seen it before, and surrounded her brow like a forest.

Thomas Hardy, 1840-1928

AN EPITAPH

My beauty was
So fine and rare,
You'd think it woven
Out of air.

All full of shadow
And of sun—
How like a breath
Of air 'tis gone.

Margaret Sackville

BEAUTY MOURNED

Thou wast that all to me, love,
For which my soul did pine—
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain in a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers
And all the flowers were mine.

Now all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy grey eye glances
And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams!

Edgar Allan Poe, 1809-1849

When to the inward darkness of my mind
I bid your face come, not one hue replies
Of that curved cheek, no, nor the faint-tinged rose
Of lips, nor smile between the mouth and eyes:
Only the eyes themselves, past telling, seem
To break in beauty in the twilight there,
And out of solitude your very ghost
Steals through the scarce-seen shadow of your hair.

Walter de la Mere

She walks in Beauty

FOR the moon never beams without bringing me
 dreams
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee,
And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

Edgar Allan Poe, 1809-1849

THEN he thought him, lying there,
 Of Queen Yseult's golden hair
 And the brows of Guinevere.

Swinburne, 1837-1909

I SEE her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair;
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

Robert Burns, 1759-1796

SHE was too lovely for remembrance—
Let us forget her like a dream,
Lest all our days and all our nights hereafter
Empty should seem.

Beauty Mourned

Let not the blind remember beauty,
Nor deaf men think upon a tune:
There are things that are too lovely for remem-
brance—
Let us forget her soon.

Let us forget her—we who loved her—
For pity's sake, for comfort's sake:
Lest, plucked too soon by the long hands of sorrow,
Our heart-strings break.

Jan Struther

She walks in Beauty

GHOSTS

Oh! Death will find me, long before I tire
Of watching you; and swing me suddenly
Into the shade and loneliness and mire
Of the last land! There waiting patiently,

One day, I think, I'll feel a cool wind blowing,
See a slow light across the Stygian tide,
And hear the Dead about me stir, unknowing,
And tremble. And I shall know that you have died,

And watch you, a broad-browed and smiling dream,
Pass, light as ever, through the lightless host,
Quietly ponder, start, and sway, and gleam—
Most individual and bewildering ghost!—

And turn and toss your brown delightful head
Amusedly, among the ancient Dead.

Rupert Brooke, 1887-1915

Her wavy hair, on her shoulders bare,
It shone like soft clouds round the moon;
Her noiseless feet, like melting sleet,
Glanced white for a moment, then were gone.

Emily Brontë, 1818-1848

Ghosts

JULIE LOGAN

I AM no hand at describing the garb of beauty, and the nearest I can get to her, after much communing, is that she is a long stalk of loveliness. She carried a muff of fur, and at times would raise it to her face as if she knew no better than to think it was a scent-bottle, or peep over it like a sitting bird in the bole of a tree.

The upper part of her attire was black and the rest green.

There was a diverting mutch on her head which, for some reason I cannot as yet determine, you could have got on smiling terms with though you had met it hanging on a nob. . . .

I have only seen her for twenty minutes. . . .

She glides up a manse stair with what I take to be the lithesomeness of a panther. . . .

I was all throughhither when she sat down on the one of my chairs that I have hitherto held to be of the least account. She looked as meek at that moment as if a dove were brooding in her face.

It is not beauty of person that I heed but internal beauty, which in her is as plain to read as if she wore it outside. What I would least part with is the way her face sparkles, not just her eyes but her whole face. This comes and goes.

J. M. Barrie

She walks in Beauty

A VISITANT

... No known or remembered face—a phantom face, as alien and inscrutable as are the apparitions that occasionally visit the mind in sleep. . . . This homeless image was at once so real in effect, so clear and yet so unexpected. Even the faint shadowy colours of the features were discernible—the eyes dark and profound, the hair drawn back over the rather narrow temples of the oval head; a longish, quiet, intent face, veiled with reverie and a sort of vigilant sorrowfulness. So many and fleeting, of course, are the pictures that float into consciousness at the decoy of a certain kind of poetry that one hardly heeds them as they pass and fade. But this, surely, was no after-image of one of Herrick's earthly yet ethereal Electras or Antheas or Dianemes, vanishing like the rainbows in a fountain's falling waters. . . . The figure that stood before him in the darker corner there was no less sharply visible and even more actual in effect than the objects around her. One hand, from a loose sleeve, resting on the edge of the door to the staircase, she stood looking at him, her right foot with its high-heeled shoe poised delicately on the lowest of the three steps. . . . Her listless body turned a little, her shoulders slightly lifted themselves, and a faint provocative smile came into her face, while the dark, jaded eyes resting on his own remained half mocking, half deprecatory—almost as if the two of them, he and she, were old cronies who had met again after a long absence from one another, with ancient secrets awaiting discreet discussion.

Ghosts

... The head stooped forward a little; the narrow pallid slanting cyclids momentarily closed; and then, with a gesture not merely of arm or shoulder but of her whole body, she once more fixed him with a gaze more intense, more challenging, more crammed with meaning than he had supposed possible in any human eye. It was as if some small wicket gate into the glooms of Purgatory had suddenly become thronged with bright-lit faces. Until this moment they had been merely eyeing one another while time's sluggish moments ebbed away. They had been merely "looking at" one another. Now there had entered those glazed dark fixed blue eyes the very self within. It stayed there gazing out at him transfix'd—the pleading, tormented, dangerous spirit within that intangible husk. . . . Merely the image of a face floating there, with waxen downcast lids, the features passive as those of a death-mask—as unembodied an object as the after-image of a flower. There was no speculation in the downcast eyes, and in that lovely longed-for face; no, nothing whatever for *him*—and it had faded out as a mirror of green-fronded palm trees fades in the lifeless sands of the desert.

Walter de la Mare

She walks in Beauty

HER neck is like a stately tower
Where Love himself imprisoned lies.

Lodge, 1568(?)-1625

COME from thy Palace, beauteous Queen of Greece,
Sweet Helen of the world, rise like the morn
Clad in the smock of night, that all the stars
May close their eyes.

T. Randolph, 1605-1665

LADY, when your lovely head
Sinks to lie among the Dead,
And the quiet Places keep
You that so divinely sleep:
Then the Dead shall blessed be
With a New Solemnity.
For such beauty so descending
Pledges them that death is ending.
Sleep your fill—but when you wake
Dawn shall over Lethe break.

Hilaire Belloc

PART TWO

*Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow.*

SHAKESPEARE

BEAUTY'S BRIGHTNESS

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies:
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress
Or softly lightens o'er her face
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure how dear their dwelling-place.

Byron, 1788-1824

Her eyes like lilies shaken by the bees,
Her hair a net of moonbeams in a cloud,
Her thinness like a row of youngling trees,
And gold bees hummed around her in a crowd.

Dixon, 1833-1902

The blaring brightness of her beautie's beams
And glorious light of her sunshyny face.

Spenser, 1552(?)-1599

She walks in Beauty

Her angel's face
As the great eye of Heaven, shyned bright
And made a sunshyne in the shady place.

Spenser

Oh! Thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars!

Marlowe, 1564-1593

O! she doth teach the torches to burn bright,
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear.
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellow shows.

Romeo and Juliet

Do but look on her eyes, they do light
All that Love's world compriseth!
Do but look on her hair, it is bright
As Love's star when it riseth!
Do but mark, her forehead's smoother
Than words that soothe her;
And from her arched brows, such a grace
Sheds itself through the face,
As alone there triumphs to the life
All the gain, all the good of the element's strife.

Have you seen but a bright lily grow
Before rude hands have touched it?
Have you marked but the fall o' the snow
Before the soil had smutched it?

Beauty's Brightness

Have you felt the wool of beaver?
Or swan's down ever?
Or have smelt o' the bud o' the briar?
Or the nard in the fire?
Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
O so white,—O so soft,—O so sweet is she!

Ben Jonson, 1573-1637

And bright face crescent-browed
And throat by Muses moulded;
And eyelids lightly falling
On little glistening seas.

Cory, 1823-1892

My love is of comely height and straight
And comely in all her ways and gait;
She shows in her face the rose's hue
And her lids on her eyes are white on blue.

Barnes, 1821-1835

O ruddier than the Cherry,
O sweeter than the Berry,
O Nymph more bright
Than Moonshine Night,
Like kidlings blithe and merry,
Ripe as the melting Cluster,
No Lilly has such Lustre.
Yet hard to tame
As raging Flame
And fierce as Storms that bluster.

John Gay, 1685-1732

She walks in Beauty

HER haire like crystal stone, her mouth o heavenly wide!

Her skin like burnisht gold, her hands like silver-ore untried.

Philip Sidney, 1554-1586

So fair a creature! of such charms compact
As nature stints elsewhere: which you may find
Under the tender eyelid of a serpent
Or in the gurge of a kiss-coloured rose
By drops and sparks, but when she moves, you see
Fresh beauty tremble out of her, and lave
Her fair sides to the ground.

Beddoes, 1803-1849

HER beauty would surprise
Gazers on Autumn eves,
Who watched the broad moon rise
Upon the scattered sheaves.

Robert Bridges, 1844-1930

GOLDEN BEAUTY

LIZZIE AND LAURA

GOLDEN head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
They lay down in their curtained bed:
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new fall'n snow,
Like two wands of ivory
Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
 Round their nest:
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.

Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-veined stone
Lashed by tides obstreperously,—

She walks in Beauty

Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894

HER wide green-blue eyes seemed like the heart of some curious, full-open flower, some Christmas rose with its petals of snow and flush. Her hair glinted heavy like water-gold. She stood there passive and indomitable with the wide-eyed persistence of her wintry blonde nature . . . the black lace of her veil thrown back over her close-fitting dull-gold-threaded hat, and her face like a winter flower in a cranny of darkness.

D. H. Lawrence, 1885-1930

Golden Beauty

Good sooth! she is the Queen of curds and cream.
Winter's Tale

MORE white than whitest lilies far,
Or snow or whitest swans you are:
More white than are the whitest creams,
Or moonlight tinselling the streams:
More white than pearls, or Juno's thigh,
Or Pelops' arm of ivory.

Herrick, 1591-1674

SWIFT running Atalanta golden-haired--
Grey-eyed and simple with her white limbs bared
And sandalled feet set firm upon the sand
Amid the wondering heroes did she stand.

William Morris, 1834-1896

I saw fair Chloris walk alone,
When feather'd rain came softly down,
And Jove descended from his tower
To court her in a silver shower.
The wanton snow flew to her breast,
Like little birds into their nest;
And overcome with whiteness there,
For grief it thaw'd into a tear;
Thence falling on her garment's hem,
To deck her, froze into a gem.

William Shakspeare, 1564-1616

She walks in Beauty

BEFORE the urchin well could go,
She stole the whiteness of the snow;
And more,—that whiteness to adorn,
She stole the blushes of the morn:
Stole all the sweets that ether sheds
On primrose buds or violet beds.

Earl of Egremont, 1710-1763

THOU divinest, fairest, brightest,
Thou most powerful maid and whitest,
Eyes of stars, and golden tressèd
Like Apollo.

Beaumont and Fletcher

THE face, like a silver wedge
'Mid the yellow wreath.

Browning, 1812-1889

WHITE as blanched almonds or the falling snow.

Cotton, 1630-1687

ZENOCRATE, lovelier than the love of Jove,
Brighter than is the silver Rhodope,
Fairer than whitest snow of Scythian hills.

Marlowe, 1564-1593

She walks in Beauty

THINE eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain,
Have put on black, and loving mourners be,
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
And truly not the morning sun of Heaven
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face.

Shakespeare, 1564-1616

SHE had a mouth

Made to bring death to life,—the underlip
Sucked in, as if it strove to kiss itself.
Her face was pearly pale, as when one stoops
Over wan water; and the dark crisped hair
And the hair's shadow made it paler still:—
Deep serried locks, the dimness of the cloud
Where the moon's gaze is set in eddying gloom.
Her body bore her neck as the tree's stem
Bears the top branch; and as the branch sustains
The flower of the year's pride, her high neck bore
That face made wonderful with night and day.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828-1882

THE low wide brow oppressed by sweeps of hair
Darker and darker as they coil and swathe
The crowned corpse-wanness whence the eyes burn
black.

Browning, 1812-1889

VARIETY

AGE cannot wither nor custom stale
Her infinite variety.

Antony and Cleopatra

WHEN'ER with soft serenity she smil'd
Or caught the orient blush of quick surprise,
How sweetly mutable, how brightly wild
The liquid lustre darted from her eyes!

Each look, each motion, wak'd a new-born grace
That o'er her form a transient glory cast;
Some livelier wonder soon usurp'd the place,
Chac'd by a charm still lovelier than the last.

Maren

STILL as a lily, only more fair,
She stands, my lily; if she stir,
There's no motion lovelier.

Her soul is some still lake, which keeps
Among the moonlit hills and keeps
Soft clouds in its translucent deeps.

She walks in Beauty

She speaks and speaking seems to bend
A soft ear, listening to some friend
The heavens with her to whisper send.

Who'll fix what colour are her eyes
Whose changing hue chameleon-wise
Brings each charmed minute new surprise?

Thomas Ashe, 1836-1889

SHE had a most extraordinary face. I canna exact describe it, for she would be laughing one second and syne solemn the next. I tell you her face changed as quick as you could turn the pages of a book.

J. M. Barrie

She walks in Beauty

mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments and tinged the eyelids and the hands.

Walter Pater, 1839-1894

THE divine plain face of Miss Kelly.

Charles Lamb, 1775-1834

THE stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

Wordsworth, 1770-1850

How should I gauge what beauty is her dole,
Who cannot see her countenance for her soul;
As birds see not the casement for the sky?
And as 'tis check they prove its presence by,
I know not of her body till I find
My flight debarred the heaven of her mind.
Hers is the face whence all should copied be,
Did God make replicas of such as she:
Its presence felt by what it doth abate,
Because the soul shines through tempered and
mitigate:
Where—as a figure labouring at night
Beside the body of a splendid light—

“Beauty Wrought Out from Within”

Dark Time works hidden by its luminousness;
And every line he labours to impress
Turns added beauty, like the veins that run
Athwart a leaf which hangs against the sun.

Francis Thompson, 1859-1907

TILL that divine
Idea take a shrine
Of chrystal flesh, through which to shine.

Crashaw, 1613(?)-1649

You, for whose body God made better clay,
Or took Soules stusse such as shall late decay,
Or such as needs small change at the last day.

This, as an Amber drop enwraps a Bee,
Covering discovers your quicke Soule; that we
May in your through-shine front your heart's
thoughts see. *Donne, 1573-1631*

The morning is not thine, nor yet the night,
But that frail interval between,
The twilight and the dusk light,
Whose delicate shades are dimly seen
In the sweet ironies of thy lips,
The fleeting curve of lovely fingers,
When laughter glides behind its veil,
And in those questing eyes a faint amusement lingers.
Thou art the child of thine imaginings;
Like swallows hunting round a bay
Between the clouds, at the end of day,
Thy thoughts go chating by on shadowy wings.

Herbert Asquith

She walks in Beauty

BEAUTY'S EYES

AND those eyes the break of day
Lights that do mislead the morn!

Shakespeare, 1564-1616

HER eyes are sapphires set in snow.

Lodge, 1556(?)-1625

God set her brave eyes wide apart
And painted them with fire;
They stir the ashes of my heart
To embers of desire.

Richard Middleton

HER great eyes, standing far apart,
Draw up some memory from her heart
And gaze out very mournfully.
So beautiful and kind they are,
But most times looking out afar,
Waiting for something, not for me.

William Morris, 1834-1896

Beauty's Eyes

My love is now awake out of her dreames,
And her fayre eyes like stars that dimmed were
With darksome cloud, now shew they're goodly
beams
More bright than Hesperus his head doth rere.

Spenser, 1552-1599

Tess . . . with her flower-like mouth and large
tender eyes, neither black nor blue nor gray nor
violet; rather all these shades together, and a
hundred others, which could be seen if one looked
into their irises—shade behind shade—tint beyond
tint—around pupils that had no bottom. . . .

Thomas Hardy, 1840-1928

THOSE eyes of deep, soft, lucent hue—
Eyes too expressive to be blue,
Too lovely to be gray.

Matthew Arnold, 1822-1888

HER lovely eyes troubled the lids to hide their
softness.

Meredith, 1828-1909

THE water-wraith that cries
From those eternal sorrow of her pictured eyes
Entwines and draws me down their soundless
intricacies.

Foxe Terpion, 1839-1907

She walks in Beauty

THE star-like sorrows of immortal eyes.

Tennyson, 1809-1892

FROM women's eyes this doctrine I derive,
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire,
They are the books, the arts, the academes
That show, contain and nourish all the world.

Shakespeare, 1564-1616

ASK me no more where those stars light
That downwards fall in dead of night,
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixed become as in their sphere.

Carew, 1595-1639

A PAIR OF BLUE EYES

IN them was seen a sublimation of all of her; it was not necessary to look further: there she lived.

These eyes were blue; blue as an autumn distance—blue as the blue we see between the retreating mouldings of hills and woody slopes on a sunny September morning. A misty and shady blue, that had no beginning or surface, and was looked into rather than at.

Hardy, 1840-1928

TILL then her lovely eyes maintain
Their gay unwavering deep disdain.

Matthew Arnold, 1822-1888

Beauty's Eyes

EYES, what are they? Coloured glass,
Where reflections come and pass.

Open windows—by them sit
Beauty, Learning, Love and Wit.

Searching cross-examiners;
Comforts holy ministers.

Starry silences of soul,
Music past the lip's control.

Fountains of unearthly light,
Prisons of the infinite.

Mary Coleridge, 1851-1907

Tiny brown eyes have looks like birds
Flying straightway to the light.

Elizabeth Browning, 1806-1861

The dawn was apple-green,
The sky was green wine held up in the sun,
The moon was a golden petal between.

She opened her eyes, and green
They shone, clear like flowers undone
For the first time, now for the first time seen.

D. H. Lawrence, 1885-1930

DUDAIN and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes!
Mark Ado about Nothing

She walks in Beauty

Oh! could you view the melody
Of every grace
And music of her face,
You'd drop a tear,
Seeing more harmony
In her bright eye
Than now you hear.

Richard Lovelace, 1618-1658

ACROSS what calm of tropic seas,
'Neath alien clusters of the nights,
Looked, in the past, such eyes as these?
Long-quenched, relumed, ancestral lights!

The generations fostered them;
And stedfast Nature, secretwise—
Thou seedling child of that old stem—
Kindles anew thy dark-bright eyes.

Alice Meynell, 1850-1922

STARS, stars, and all eyes else dead coals!

Winter's Tale

She walks in Beauty

Those cherries fairly do enclose.
Of orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rose-buds fill'd with snow;
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy
Till "Cherry-ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threat'ning with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt with eye or hand
Those sacred cherries to come nigh,
Till "Cherry-ripe" themselves do cry.

Thomas Campion, 1567-1619

TESS

How very lovable her face was to him. Yet there was nothing ethereal about it; all was real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation. And it was in her mouth that this culminated. Eyes almost as deep and speaking he had seen before, and cheeks perhaps as fair; brows as arched, a chin and throat almost as shapely; her mouth he had seen nothing to equal on the earth. To a man with the least fire in him that little upward lift in the middle of her red top lip was distracting, infatuating, maddening. He had never before seen a woman's lip which forced upon his mind with such persistent iteration the old Elizabethan simile of roses filled with snow. Perfect, he, as a lover, might have called

Beauty's Lips

them off-hand. But no—they were not perfect. And it was the touch of the imperfect upon the would-be perfect that gave the sweetness, because it was that which gave the humanity.

Thomas Hardy, 1840-1928

She walks in Beauty

BEAUTY'S HAIR

AND Beauty draws us with a single hair.

Pope

OR by those hairs, which, if thou hadst a soul
Like to thy locks, were threads for kings to wear
About their arms—

Beaumont and Fletcher

AND tied his thoughts within her lovely locks.

Greene, 1560-1592

APHRODITE with hair unbound
Her silver breasts adorning.
Her long, her soft, her streaming hair
Falls on a silver breast made bare
By the stir and swing of the sealit air
And the movement of the morning.

James Elroy Flecker, 1884-1915

AMARANTHA sweet and fair,
Ah, braid no more that shining hair!
As my curious hand or eye
Hovering round thee, let it fly!

Beauty's Hair

Let it fly as unconfin'd
As its calm ravisher the wind
Who has left his darling, th' East,
To wanton o'er that spicy nest.

Every tress must be confess,
But neatly tangled at the best;
Like a clew of golden thread
Most excellently ravell'd.

Do not then wind up that light
In ribbands, and o'ercloud in night,
Like the Sun in's early ray;
But shake your head, and scatter day!

Richard Lovelace, 1618-1658

In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair.

Milton, 1608-1674

A golden net to entrap the hearts of men
Faster than gnats in cobwebs.

Shakespeare, 1564-1616

Turret's her hair with which Love angles
And beholder's eyes entangles;
For in those fair curled snarls
They are hampered unawares,
And compelled to sweat a duty
To her sweet, entralling beauty.

She walks in Beauty

In my mind 'tis the most fair
That was ever called hair;
Somewhat brighter than a brown,
And her tresses waving down
At full length, and so disspread
Mantle her from foot to head.

George Wither, 1588-1667

I WATCHED the Lady Caroline
Bind up her dark and beauteous hair;
Her face was rosy in the glass,
And, 'twixt the coils, her hands would pass,
White in the candle-shine.

Her bottles on the table lay,
Stoppered, yet sweet of violet;
Her image in the mirror stooped
To view those locks as lightly looped
As cherry boughs in May.

The snowy night lay dim without,
I heard the Waits their sweet song sing;
The window smouldered keen with frost;
Yet still she twisted, sleeked and tossed
Her beauteous hair about.

Walter de la Mare

HER cruel hands go in and out,
Like two pale woodmen working there,
To make a nut-brown thicket clear—
The full wild foliage of her hair.

W. H. Davies

Beauty's Hair

HAVE I found her? O rich finding!
O goddess-like for to behold
Her fair tresses seemly binding
In a chain of pearl and gold.
Chain me, chain me, O most fair,
Chain me to thee with that hair!

Francis Pilkington, 1560(?)-1625(?)

ASK me no more whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day,
For in pure love Heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Carew, 1595-1639

Now comes my lover tripping like the roe
And brings my longings tangled in her hair.

George Peele, 1550(?)-1597

His thunder is entangled in my hair
And with my beauty is his lightning quenched.

George Peele

I do not love thee for that fair
Rich fan of thy most curious hair;
Though the wires thereof be drawn
Finer than the threads of lawn,
And are softer than the leaves
On which the subtle spinner weaves.

George, 1595-1639

She walks in Beauty

How the tresses curled
Into a sumptuous swell of gold and wound
About her like a glory! even the ground
Was bright as with spilt sunbeams.

Browning, 1812-1889

O LOADED curls, release your store
Of warmth and scent, as once before
The tingling hair did, lights and darks
Outbreaking into fiery sparks,
When under curl and curl I pried
After the warmth and scent inside,
Through lights and darks how manifold—
The dark inspired, the light controlled,
As early art embrowns the gold.

Browning

DEAR, dead women, with such hair, too—
What's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms?
I feel chilly and grown old.

Browning

BEAUTY OF HANDS AND FEET

The white wonder of dear Juliet's hand.

Romeo and Juliet

Your hands and fingers long
With veins enamelled richly.

Beaumont and Fletcher

I TAKE thy hand, this hand
As soft as dove's down and as white as it
Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the famed snow that's
bolted
By the northern blasts twice o'er.

Winter's Tale

Our bright hand, dawning through her hair,
Bid it be black, itself as fair
As the cold moon's palest daughter.

Beddoes, 1803-1852

She walks in Beauty

HER feet beneath her petticoat
Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared the light;
But oh, she dances such a way!
No sun upon an Easter-day
Is half so fine a sight.

Suckling, 1609-1642

HER pretty feet like snails did creep
A little out, and then
As if they played at Bo-peep
Did soon draw in again.

Herrick, 1591-1674

POOR TRILBY!

THE shape of those lovely slender feet (that were neither large nor small), facsimiled in dusty pale plaster of Paris, survives on the shelves and walls of many a studio throughout the world, and many a sculptor yet unborn has yet to marvel at their strange perfection, in studious despair.

. . . and well-worn, soft, gray, square-toed slippers of list, without heels and originally shapeless; but which her feet, uncompromising and inexorable as boot-trees, had ennobled into everlasting classic shapeliness, and stamped with an unforgettable individuality, as does a beautiful hand its well-worn glove.

George du Maurier, 1834-1896

Beauty of Hands and Feet

... Ah! see her hovering feet.
More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet
Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose
From out her cradle shell.

Keats, 1795-1821

Don't tell me your hands could die; your wonderful
Proserpine fingers. They are immortal as
February and snowdrops. If you lift your hands
the Spring comes.

D. H. Lawrence, 1885-1930

She walks in Beauty

FLOWER-LIKE BEAUTY

HER cheeks so rare a white was on,
No daisy makes comparison:
Who sees them is undone;
For streaks of red were mingled there,
Such as are on a Catharine pear,
The side that's next the sun.

John Suckling, 1609-1642

DIAPHENIA, like the daffadowndilly,
White as the sun, fair as the lilly,
Heigh ho, how I do love thee!

Diaphenia, like the spreading roses,
That in thy sweets all sweets encloses,
Fair sweet, how I do love thee!

Henry Constable, 1562-1613

O my Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve's like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune!

Robert Burns, 1759-1796

Flower-like Beauty

... AND lightly was her slender nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower.

Tennyson, 1809-1892

JANCIS was a little thing, but you always saw her before you saw other people, for it seemed that the light gathered round her. She'd got golden hair, and all the shadows on her face seemed to be stained with the pale colour of it. I used to think she was like a water-lily full of yellow pollen or honey. She'd got a very white skin, creamy white, without any colour unless she was excited or shy, and her face was dimpled and soft.

She'd got a red, cool, smiling mouth, and when she smiled the dimples ran into each other. . . . She'd got a way of saying "O" before everything, and it made her mouth look like a rose.

Mary Webb

... O thou weed,
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet
That the sense aches at thee,—would thou had'st
ne'er been born!

Othello

SUSAN Moynihan—the very moment I saw her I loved her; just as one loves a field of buttercups or a bush of may.

I would look at her just for pleasure's sake. Her

She walks in Beauty

hair was of the colour of undyed silk, with darker strands in it; her skin pale; and she had an odd little stutter in her light young voice when she was excited. There was a lovely delicacy in her, as if, absurd though it may sound, every bit of her had been selected, actually picked out, from the finest materials.

Walter de la Mare

WHEN at dawn she sighs, and like an infant to the window

Turns grave eyes craving light, released from dreams,

Beautiful she looks, like a white water-lily

Bursting out of bud in havens of the streams.

When from bed she rises clothed from neck to ankle

In her long nightgown sweet as boughs of May,

Beautiful she looks, like a tall garden-lily

Pure from the night, and splendid for the day.

Meredith, 1828-1909

ASK me no more where Jove bestowes,

When June is past, the fading rose:

For in your beauties orient deep,

These Flowers as in their causes sleep.

Carew, 1595(?) - 1639(?)

Flower-like Beauty

He that still may see your checks,
Where all rareness still reposes,
Is a fool, if e'er he seeks
Other lilies, other roses.
Welcome, welcome, do I sing,
Far more welcome than the spring;
He that parteth from you never
Shall enjoy a spring for ever.

William Browne, 1591-1643(?)

She was so tenderly beautiful. . . . Washed all clean by her tears, she was new and frail like a flower just unfolded, a flower so new, so tender, so made perfect by inner light, that he could not bear to look at her. She had the perfect candour of creation, something translucent and simple, like a radiant shining flower that moment unfolded in primal blessedness. She was so new, so wonder-clear, so undimmed.

D. H. Lawrence, 1885-1930

She walks in Beauty

“THE LOOK OF THE
NYMPH”

She certainly had at times the look of the nymph
that has gazed too long on the faun, and has
unwittingly copied his lurking lip and long sliding
eye.

George Meredith, 1828-1909

’TWAS from Avona’s bank, the maid
Diffus’d her lovely beams
And every shining grace display’d
The Naiad of the streams.

Soft as the wild duck’s tender young
That float on Avon’s tide:
Bright as the water-lily sprung
And glittering near its side.

Fresh as the bordering flowers, her bloom,
Her eye all mild to view
The little halcyon’s azure plume
Was never half so blue.

Her shape was like the reed, so sleek,
So taper, straight and fair:
Her dimpled smile, her blushing cheek
How charming sweet they were.

Shenstone, 1714-1763

She walks in Beauty

HOW STATUE-LIKE

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicæan barks of yore
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary way-worn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo, in yon brilliant window niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand.
Ah! Psyche, from the regions which
Are holy land!

Edgar Allan Poe, 1809-1849

STILLER than chisell'd marble, standing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Tennyson, 1809-1892

“BEAUTY NOT COMPLETE”

FAULTS of feature some see, beauty not complete
Yet, good gossips, beauty that makes holy
Earth and air, may have faults from head to feet.

Meredith, 1828-1909

YET she is not fair,
Nor beautiful; these words express her not:
They say, her looks have something excellent,
That wants a name.

Beaumont and Fletcher

CLARA came along chattering and laughing with Colonel de Craye, young Crossjay's hand under one of her arms, and her parasol flashing; a dazzling offender; as if she wished to compel the spectator to recognise the dainty rogue in porcelain; really insufferably fair; perfect in height and grace of movement; exquisitely-tressed; red-lipped, the colour striking out to a distance from her ivory skin; a sight to set the woodland dancing, and turn the heads of the town; though beautiful, a jury of art-critics might pronounce her not to be. Irregular

She walks in Beauty

features are condemned in beauty. Beautiful figure, they could say. A description of her figure and her walking would have won her any praises: and she wore a dress cunning to embrace the shape and flutter loose about it, in the spirit of a Summer's day. Calypso-clad, Dr. Middleton would have called her. See the silver birch in a breeze: here it swells, there it scutters, and it is puffed to a round and it streams to a pennon, and now gives the glimpse and shine of the white stem's line within, now hurries over it, denying that it was visible, with a chatter along the sweeping folds, while still the white peeps through. She had the wonderful art of dressing to suit the seasons and the sky. To-day the art was ravishingly companionable with her sweet-lighted face; too sweet, too vividly meaningful for pretty, if not of the strict severity for beautiful. . . . She carried a grey silk parasol, traced at the borders with green creepers, and across the arm, devoted to Crossjay, a length of trailing ivy, and in that hand a bunch of the first long grasses. These hues of red rose and green and pale green, ruffled and pouted in the billowy white of the dress ballooning and volleying softly, like a yacht before the sail bends low; resembling rather the day of the south-west driving the clouds, gallantly firm in commotion; interfusing colour and varying in her features from laugh to smile and look of settled pleasure, like the heavens above the breeze.

George Meredith, 1828-1909

VITALITY

THERE's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip.
Nay her foot speaks, her wanton spirits look out
At every joint and motive of her body.

Troilus and Cressida

THE tendrils of burnished hair about her forehead
and ears curled and shone with life: her body was
taut as a slim arrow ready to fly from life's bow.

Mary Webb

SHE was the smallest lady alive,
Made in a piece of Nature's madness,
Too small, almost, for the life and gladness
That over-filled her. *Browning, 1812-1889*

MERRY Margaret
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon.
Or hawk at the tower;
With solace and gladness,
Much mirth and no madness,
All good and no badness.

Skelton, 1450-1529

She walks in Beauty

... HER pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
That one might almost say her body thought.

Donne, 1573-1633

THOU art fair, and few are fairer
Of the nymphs of earth and ocean.
They are robes that fit the wearer—
Those soft limbs of thine, whose motion
Ever falls and shifts and glances
As the life within them dances.

Shelley, 1792-1822

“A FACE THAT SHOULD
CONTENT ME
WONDROUS WELL”

A face that should content me wondrous well
Should not be fair but lovely to behold;
With gladsome cheer, all grief for to expel;
With sober looks so would I that it should
Speak without words, such words as none can tell:
The tress also should be of crisped gold
With wit and these might chance I might be tied,
And knit again the knot that shall not slide.

Sir Thomas Wyatt, 1503-1542

As is your name, so is your comely face
Touch'd everywhere with such diffusèd grace,
As that in all that admirable round
There is not one least solecism found;
And as that part, so every portion else
Keeps line for line with beauty's parallels.

Henry, 1591-1674

She walks in Beauty

But the foundation of the architect
Is the swan-staining, fair, rare, stately neck
Which with ambitious humbleness stands under,
Bearing aloft this rich, round world of wonder.

Herrick

VIEW well her face, and in that little round
You may observe a world's variety;
For jewels, eyes; for threads of purest gold,
Hair; for delicious choice of flowers, cheeks!
Wonder in every portion of that throne.

Ford, 1586-1639

I WILL not look upon the quickening sun
But straight her beauty to my sense shall run:
The air shall note her soft, the fire most pure:
Waters suggest her clear, and the earth sure.

Donne, 1573-1631

HIGH grace, the dower of queens; and there withal
Some wood-born wonder's sweet simplicity,
A glance like water brimming with the sky
Or hyacinth-light where forest-shadows fall.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828-1882

THE glorious portrait of that Angel's face,
Made to amaze weak men's confused skill,
And this world's worthless glory to embrace,
What pen, what pencil, can express her fill?
For, though he colours could devise at will,
And eke his learned hand at pleasure guide,

“A Face that Should Content Me”

Lest, trembling, it his workmanship should spill;
Yet many wondrous things there are beside;
The sweet eye-glances that like arrows glide,
The charming smiles, that rob sense from the heart,
The lovely pleasance, and the lofty pride,
Cannot expressed be by any art.
A greater craftsman's hand thereto doth need,
That can express the life of things indeed.

Spenser, 1552(?)-1599

. . . 'Tis that miracle and queen of gems
That Nature pranks her in attracts my soul.

Twelfth Night

See where she comes, apparell'd like the Spring.
Graces her subjects, and her thoughts the King
Of every virtue gives renown to men!
Her face the book of praises, where is read
Nothing but curious pleasures, as from thence
Sorrow were ever raz'd and testy wrath
Could never be her mild companion. *Parades*

WHEN I behold my sweeting sweet,
Her face, her hands, her minion feet,
They seem to me there is none so meet
As my sweet sweeting.
Above all other praise must I
And love my pretty pignionic,
For none I find so womanly
As my sweet sweeting. *Twelfth Night*

She walks in Beauty

RUSTIC BEAUTY

RUTH

She stood breast-high amid the corn,
Clasp'd by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripen'd;—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veil'd a light,
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim;
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks.

Thomas Hood, 1798-1845

Rustic Beauty

My love is neither young nor old,
Nor fiery hot nor frozen cold
But fresh and fair as springing briar
Blooming the fruit of love's desire;
Not snowy-white nor rosy-red:
But fair enough for shepherd's bed.

Anon.

O FAIREST of the rural maids!
Thy birth was in the forest shades;
And all the beauty of the place
Is in thy heart and on thy face.

The twilight of the trees and rocks
Is in the light shade of thy locks;
Thy step is as the wind that weaves
Its playful way among the leaves.

Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene
And silent waters heaven is seen;
Their lashes are the herby that look
On their young figures in the brook.

William Cullen Bryant, 1794-1879

Till very room, e'er she was in,
Seemed warm from floor to ceilin',
An' she look'd full er' rosy agin
Ex the apples she was peelin'.

She walks in Beauty

'T was kin' o' kingdom-come to look
On sech a blessedèd cretur,
A dogrose blushin' to a brook
Ain't modester nor sweeter.

James Russell Lowell, 1819-1891

YOUR eyes most grave and brown,
Your far-off gaze,
Not of the town indeed
In these strange days.

They look beyond the throng,
Their thoughts are slow;
What place they see, what dreams
I do not know.

What hopes they have, what joy,
What sorrow too:
All this if it is known
Is known to few.

But I who see you now
Bareheaded see
That by that fact you come
From the country.

Some farm, some distant spot,
Some lonely place:
I wish that village well
For your calm face.

Rustic Beauty

I wish that village well
Whose cloudless skies,
Whose quiet fields at dusk
Made your mild eyes.

Your thoughts, your hidden hopes
I cannot tell,
But if one thinks of you—
I wish him well.

Monk Gibbon

She walks in Beauty

THE HABIT OF BEAUTY

BEAUTY does not come at once, not merely by nature; it is more than a happy disposition of limb and feature, colour and line: like the singer's art, it grows out of a natural gift, which every singer has by instinct, and every beautiful person. Only in use is it perfected, and many are born with a physical endowment which they lack the genius to develop into beauty. For beauty as a human attribute means something quite other than the beauty of a landscape, a flower or an animal; it is a result, like a work of art; it is an accomplishment; and for the height of accomplishment it depends on the conception of beauty which is in the mind of its possessor. The most superb structure may be disgraced by vulgarity or stupidity of nature. Also, just as the singer or the poet is his own first and most essential audience, so the beautiful person knows and sees, subconsciously, how she looks or moves. . . .

Beauty has not come to be beauty until it is aware of itself, for its very essence is in bestowal; and the gift must have been recognised by its possessor before it can attain to full flower in the graciousness of giving. . . . She obeys what has come to be the law of her being and walks to an unheard music. . . .

She walks in Beauty

the shape and set and line of the head and neck and figure, and when these are crowned by the beauty of countenance, time can change, but can never disparage; and a person so gifted, so accomplished, retains the accomplishment and the irradiation while life lasts.

Stephen Gwynn

PART THREE

*Give Beauty all her right,
She's not to one form tied,
Each shape yields fair delight
Where her perfections bide.
Free Beauty is not bound
To one unmot'd clime;
She visits every ground
And favours every time.*

CAMPION

She walks in Beauty

Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
Her shoes were laced on her legges hye;
She was a prymereole, a pigges-nye
For any lord to leggen in his bedde
Or yet for any good yeomen to wedde.

Chaucer, 1340(?)-1400

FAIR INES

O saw ye not fair Ines?
She's gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down
And rob the world of rest:
She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best.
With morning blushes on her cheek,
And pearls upon her breast.

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
And banners waved before;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore:
It would have been a beauteous dream,—
If it had been no more!

Thomas Hood, 1799-1845

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MADELINE

FULL on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven . . .

. . . her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppres'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a nuptial where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Kest, 1735-1831

She walks in Beauty

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

THE blessed damozel lean'd out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters still'd at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828-1882

BEAUTIFUL QUEENS

CLEOPATRA

THE barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water; the poop was beaten gold:
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were
silver,
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat to follow faster,

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As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggar'd all description: she did lie
In her pavilion—cloth-of-gold of tissue,—
O'er picturing that Venus where we see
The fancy out-work nature: on each side her
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
With divers colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate checks which they did cool.
And what they undid did.

Antony and Cleopatra

ISEULT

And on the deck between the rowers at dawn,
As the bright sail with brightening wind was drawn,
Sat with full face against the strengthening light
Iseult, more fair than foam or dawn was white.
Her gaze was glad past love's own singing of,
And her face lovely past desire of love.
The very veil of her bright flesh was made
As of light woven and moonbeam-coloured shade
More fine than moonbeams; white her eyelids shone
As snow sun-stricken that endures the sun.
And through their curled and coloured clouds of
deep
Luminous lashes thick as dreams in sleep
Shone as the sea's depth swallowing up the sky's,
The springs of unimaginable eyes.

Enchanted, 1857-1859

She walks in Beauty

GUINEVERE

SHE seem'd a part of joyous Spring
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before;
A light green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring. . . .
As fast she fled thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid:
She looked so lovely as she sway'd.

Tennyson, 1809-1892

IN PRAISE OF ELIZA, QUEEN OF SHEPHERDS (QUEEN ELIZABETH)

SEE, where she sits, upon the grassy green,
O! seemly sight!
Yclad, in scarlet, like a maiden Queen
And ermines white:
Upon her head a crimson coronet,
With damask Roses and Daffodillies set:
 Bay-leaves between
 And Primroses green
Embellish the sweet Violet. *Spenser, 1552-1599*

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

SHE was not yet nineteen years old, but mind and body had matured amidst the scenes in which she had passed her girlhood. Graceful alike in person and in intellect, she possessed that peculiar beauty in which the form is lost in the expression and which every painter therefore has represented differently.

Froude, 1818-1894

She walks in Beauty

hands, her wrist no bigger than a stalk, her little feet!

She had sometimes an intent, considering, wise look—the look of the Queen of Desire, who knew not where to set the bounds of her need, but revealed to no one what that was. And belying that look askance of hers—sly, or wise, or sleepy, as you choose—her voice was bold and very clear, her manners were those of a lively graceful boy, her gestures quick, her spirit impatient and entirely without fear. Her changes of mood were dangerous.

She wrote a beautiful bold hand, loved learning, and petting, and a choice phrase. She used perfumes, and dipped her body every day in a bath of wine. At this hour she was nineteen years old, and not two months a widow. *Maurice Hewlett*

MARIE ANTOINETTE

IT is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she had just begun to move in—glittering like the morning star full of life and splendour and joy. . . . Little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men—in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult.

Burke, 1729-1797

She walks in Beauty

FANNY KEMBLE

... With her black hair and radiant smile, her eyes and eyelids full of utterance.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1806-1861

RACHEL

SHE rose at nine that December night, above the horizon I saw her come. She could shine yet with pale grandeur and steady might; but that star verged already on its judgment day. Seen near, it was a chaos—hollow, half consumed: an orb perished or perishing—half lava, half glow. . . . What I saw was the shadow of a royal Vashti: a queen, fair as the day once, turned pale now like twilight, and wasted like wax in flame.

Charlotte Brontë, 1816-1855

ELLEN TERRY

as Henrietta Maria

IN the lone tent, waiting for victory,
She stands with eyes marred by the mists of pain
Like some wan lily overdrenched with rain. . . .

O hair of gold! O crimson lips! O face
Made for the luring and the love of man!

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as Portia

For in that gorgeous dress of beaten gold
Which is more golden than the golden sun
No woman Veronese looked upon
Was half so fair as thou whom I behold,
Yet fairer when with wisdom as your shield
The sober-suited lawyer's gown you donned.

Oscar Wilde, 1856-1900

* * *

THE HAY-MAKER

So fair a complexion could not brown even in summer, exposed to the utmost heat. The beams did heighten the hue of her cheeks a little, but it did not shade to brown. Her chin and neck were wholly untanned, white and soft, and the blue veins roamed at their will. Lips red, a little full perhaps; teeth white and gleamy as she smiled. Dark brown hair always slipping out of its confinement and struggling now on her forehead, and now on her shoulders, like wandering bines of bryony. The softest of brown eyes under long eyelashes; eyes that seemed to see everything in its gentlest aspect, that could see no harm anywhere. A ready smile on the face, and a smile in the form. Her shape yielded so easily at each movement that it seemed to smile as she walked.

Her nose was the least pleasing feature—not delicate enough to fit with the complexion. But it was not noticed; no one saw anything beyond the

She walks in Beauty

laughing lips, the laughing shape, the eyes that melted so near to tears. The torn dress, the straggling hair, the tattered shoes, the unmended stocking, the straw hat split, the mingled poverty and carelessness—perhaps rather dreaminess—disappeared when once you had met the full untroubled gaze of those beautiful eyes. Untroubled that is with any ulterior thought of evil or cunning; they were as open as the day, the day which you can make your own for evil or good. So, too, like the day, was she ready for the making. No stability; now fast in motion; now slow. Never going straight, even along the road. Talking with the waggoner, helping a child to pick watercress, patting the shepherd's dog, finding a flower, and late every morning at the hay-field. . . . No character whatever, no more than the wind; she was like a well-hung gate swinging to a touch; like water yielding to let a reed sway; like a singing-flame rising and falling to a word, and even to an altered tone of voice. Always yielding, sweet and gentle.

Richard Jefferies, 1848-1887

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THE GYPSY GIRL

SHE was very beautiful. Her skin was like a trout-pool—clear and yet brown. I never saw any eyes like her eyes. Her hair was the colour of ripe blackberries in a hot hedge—very ripe ones, with the bloom on. She moved like a snake. I have seen my father chase a snake more than once, and I have seen a good many men and women in my time. Some of them walk like my father, they hustle along and kick up the leaves as he does; and some of them move quickly and yet softly, as snakes go. The gypsy girl moved so, and wherever she went the gypsy man's eyes went after her.

Juliana Horatia Ewing, 1841-1885

HETTY SORREL.

... A BEAUTY with which you can never be angry, but that you feel ready to crush from inability to comprehend the state of mind into which it throws you. Hetty Sorrel's was that sort of beauty. It is of little use for me to tell you that her cheek was like a rose-petal, that dimples played about her pouting lips, that her large dark eyes hid a soft roguishness under their long lashes, and that her curly hair, though all pushed back under her round cap while she was at work, stole back in dark, delicate rings on her forehead, and about her white shell-like ears; it is of little use for me to say how lovely was the contour of her pink and

She walks in Beauty

white neckerchief, tucked into her low plum-coloured stuff bodice, or how the linen butter-making apron, with its bib, fell in such charming lines, or how her brown stockings and thick-soled buckled shoes lost all that clumsiness which they must certainly have had when empty of her foot and ankle;—of little use unless you have seen a woman who affected you as Hetty affected her beholders, for otherwise, though you might conjure up the image of a lovely woman, she would not in the least resemble that distracting kitten-like maiden. I might mention all the charms of a bright spring day, but if you had never in your life utterly forgotten yourself in straining your eyes after the mounting lark, or in wandering through the still lanes when the fresh-opened blossoms fill them with a sacred silent beauty like that of fretted aisles, where would be the use of my descriptive catalogue? I could never make you know what I meant by a bright spring day. Hetty's was a spring-tide beauty; it was the beauty of young frisking things, round-limbed, gambolling, circumventing you by a false air of innocence—the innocence of a young star-browed calf, for example. . . .

Hetty's face had a language that transcended her feelings. There are faces which nature charges with a meaning and pathos not belonging to the single human soul that flutters beneath them, but speaking the joys and sorrows of foregone generations—eyes that tell of deep love which doubtless has been and is somewhere, but not paired with these eyes—perhaps paired with pale eyes that can

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say nothing; just as a national language may be instinct with poetry unfelt by the lips that use it.

George Eliot, 1819-1880

BEATRIX

FROM one of these doors, a wax candle in her hand, and illuminating her, came Mistress Beatrix—the light falling indeed upon the scarlet riband which she wore, and upon the most brilliant white neck in the world. Esmond had left a child and found a woman, grown beyond the common height; and arrived at such a dazzling completeness of beauty that his eyes might well show surprise and delight at beholding her. In hers there was a brightness so lustrous and melting that I have seen a whole assembly follow her as if by an attraction irresistible: and that night the great Duke was at the playhouse after *Ramilies*, every soul turned and looked (she chanced to enter at the opposite side of the theatre at the same moment) at her, and not at him. She was a brown beauty: that is, her eyes, hair, and eyebrows and eyelashes were dark: her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders; but her complexion was as dazzlingly white as snow in sunshine: except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect

She walks in Beauty

symmetry, health, decision, activity, whose foot as it planted itself on the ground was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace—agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen—now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic—there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes feels young again, and remembers a paragon.

So she came holding her dress with one fair rounded arm and her taper before her, tripping down the stair to meet Esmond.

Thackeray, 1811-1863

SHIRLEY

SHE was gracefully made, and her face possessed a charm as well described by the word grace as any other. It was pale naturally, but intelligent and of varied expression. Clear and dark were the characteristics of her aspect as to colour: her face and brow were clear, her eyes of the darkest gray: no green lights in them—transparent, pure, neutral grey: and her hair of the darkest brown. Her features were distinguished; by which I do not mean that they were high, bony and Roman, being indeed rather small and slightly marked than otherwise; but only that they were, to use a few French words, “fins, gracieux, spirituel”; mobile they were and speaking; but their changes were not to be understood, nor their language interpreted all at once . . . she put her hands behind her, and stood bending slightly towards her guest, still regarding

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her, in the attitude and with something of the aspect of a grave but gallant little cavalier. This temporary expression of face was aided by the style in which she wore her hair, parted on one temple, and brushed in a glossy sweep above the forehead, whence it fell in curls that looked natural, so free were their wavy undulations.

Charlotte Brontë, 1816-1855

PEARL

The child had a native grace which does not invariably co-exist with faultless beauty; its attire, however simple, always impressed the beholder as if it were the very garb that precisely became it best. . . . So magnificent was the small figure when thus arrayed, and such was the splendour of Pearl's own beauty, shining through the gorgeous robes which might have extinguished a paler loveliness, that there was an absolute circle of radiance around her on the darksome cottage floor. Pearl's aspect was imbued with a spell of infinite variety; in this one child there were many children, comprehending the full scope between the wild-flower prettiness of a peasant baby, and the pomp, in little, of an infant Princess. Throughout all, however, there was a trait of passion, a certain depth of hue which she never lost; and if, in any of her changes, she had grown fainter or paler, she would have ceased to be herself. . . . Whenever that look appeared in her wild, bright, deeply black

She walks in Beauty

eyes, it invested her with a strange remoteness and intangibility: it was as if she were hovering in the air, and might vanish, like a glimmering light that comes we know not whence, and goes we know not whither.

Hawthorne, 1807-1864

CHRISTINA IN CHURCH

HER frock was of straw-coloured jaconet muslin, cut low at the bosom and short at the ankle, so as to display her demi-broquins of Regency violet, crossing with many straps upon a yellow cobweb stocking.

According to the pretty fashion in which our grandmothers did not hesitate to appear, the dress was drawn up so as to mould the contour of both breasts, and in the nook between, a cairngorm brooch maintained it. Here, too, trembled a nose-gay of primroses.

She wore on her shoulders—or rather, on her back and not her shoulders, which it scarcely passed—a French coat of sarsenet, tied in front with Margate braces, and of the same colour with her violet shoes. About her face clustered a disorder of dark ringlets, a little garland of yellow French roses surmounted her brow, and the whole was crowned by a village hat of cheap straw. Amongst all the rosy and all the weathered faces that surrounded her in church, she glowed like an open flower—girl and raiment, and the cairngorm

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that caught the daylight and returned it in a fiery flash, and the threads of bronze and gold that played in her hair.

Archie was attracted by the bright thing like a child. He looked at her again and yet again, and their looks crossed. He saw the red blood work vividly under her tawny skin. Her eye, which was great as a stag's, struck and held his gaze. . . .

Christina felt the shock of their encountering glances, and seemed to rise, clothed in smiles into the region of the vague and bright. But the gratification was not more exquisite than it was brief. She looked away abruptly and immediately began to blame herself for that abruptness.

She knew what she should have done, too late—turned slowly with her nose in the air. And meantime his look was not removed, but continued to play upon her like a battery of cannon constantly aimed, and now seemed to isolate her alone with him, and now seemed to uplift her, as on a pillory before the congregation. For Archie continued to drink her in with his eyes, even as a wayfarer comes to a well-head on a mountain, and stoops his face with thirst unassuageable. And Christina was conscious of his gaze . . . she was conscious of changing colour, conscious of her unsteady breath. Like a creature tracked, run down, surrounded, she sought in a dozen ways to give herself a countenance. She used her handkerchief—it was a really fine one—then she desisted in a panic: "He would only think I was too wan." She took to reading in the poetical psalms, and then remembered it was

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sermon-time. Last she put a "sugar-bool" in her mouth, and the next moment repented of the step. It was such a homely-like thing! . . . and with a palpable effort she swallowed it whole, and her colour flamed high. . . .

It was simply as a manœuvre of propriety, as something called for to lessen the significance of what had gone before, that she should a second time meet his eyes, and this time without blushing. And at the memory of the blush, she blushed again, and became one general blush burning from head to foot.

R. L. Stevenson, 1850-1894

CLARA MIDDLETON

SHE had the mouth that smiles in repose. The lips met full on the centre of the bow and thinned along to a lifting dimple; the eyelids also lifted slightly at the outer corners. . . .

Her features were playfellows of one another, none of them pretending to rigid correctness, nor the nose to the ordinary dignity of governess among merry girls, despite which the nose was of a fair design, not acutely interrogative or inviting to gambols. Aspens imaged in water waiting for the breeze would offer a susceptible lover some suggestion of her face: a pure smooth-white face, tenderly flushed in the cheeks, where the gentle dints were faintly intermelting even during quietness. Her eyes were brown, set well between mild

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lids, often shadowed, not unwakesful. Her hair of lighter brown, swelling above her temples on the sweep to the knot, imposed the triangle of the fabulous wild woodland visage from brow to mouth and chin, evidently in agreement with her taste; and the triangle suited her; but her face was not significant of a tameless wildness or of weakness; her equable shut mouth threw its long curve to guard the small chin from that effect; her eyes wavered only in humour, they were steady when thoughtfulness was awakened; and at such season the build of her winter-beechwood hair lost the touch of nymph-like and whimsical, and strangely, by mere outline, added to her appearance of studious concentration.

Observe the hawk on stretched wings over the prey he spies, for an idea of this change in the look of a young lady, whom Vernon Whitsford could liken to the Mountain Echo, and Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson pronounce to be a "dainty rogue in porcelain."

Meredith, 1828-1929

TRILBY

She walks in Beauty

She bore herself with easy, unembarrassed grace, like a person whose nerves and muscles are well in tune, whose spirits are high, who has lived much in the atmosphere of French studios and feels at home in it.

This strange medley of garments was surmounted by a small bare head with short, thick, wavy, brown hair, and a very healthy young face, which could scarcely be called quite beautiful at first sight, since the eyes were too wide apart, the mouth too large, the chin too massive, the complexion a mass of freckles. Besides, you can never tell how beautiful a face may be until you have tried to draw it. But a small portion of her neck, down by the collar-bone, which just showed itself between the unbuttoned lapels of her military coat collar, was of a delicate privet-like whiteness that is never found on any French neck, and very few English ones. Also she had a very fine brow, broad and low, with thick level eyebrows much darker than her hair, a broad, bony, high bridge to her short nose, and her full, broad cheeks were beautifully modelled. She would have made a singularly handsome boy. As the creature looked round at the assembled company and flashed her big white teeth in an all-embracing smile of uncommon width and quite irresistible sweetness, simplicity and friendly trust, one saw at a glance that she was out of the common, clever, simple, humorous, honest, brave and kind, and accustomed to be genially welcomed wherever she went.

George du Maurier, 1834-1896

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THE DUCHESS OF TOWERS

SHE was so tall that her eyes seemed almost on a level with mine, but she moved with the alert lightness and grace of a small person. Her thick, heavy hair was of a dark coppery brown; her complexion clear and pale, her eyebrows and eyelashes black, her eyes a light bluish-gray. Her nose was short and sharp and rather tilted at the tip, and her red mouth large and very mobile; and here, deviating from my preconceived ideal, she showed me how tame a preconceived ideal can be. Her perfect head was small, and round her long thick throat two slight creases went parallel, to make what French sculptors call *le collier de Vénus*; the skin of her neck was like a white camellia, and slender and square-shouldered as she was, she did not show a bone. . . . She seemed both thoughtful and mirthful at once. . . . When she laughed, she showed both top and lower teeth, which were perfect, and her eyes nearly closed, so that they could no longer be seen for the thick lashes that fringed both upper and under eyelids; at which time the expression of her face was so keenly, cruelly sweet that it went through one like a knife. And then the laugh would suddenly cease, her full lips would meet, and her eyes beam out again like two mild gray suns, benevolently humorous and kindly inquisitive, and full of interest in everything and everybody around her. But there—I cannot describe her any more than one can describe a beautiful tune.

George du Maurier, 1834-1896

She walks in Beauty

LUCY FEVEREL

ABOVE green-flashing plunges of a weir, and shaken by the thunder below, lilies golden and white were swaying at anchor among the reeds. Meadow-sweet hung from the banks thick with weed and trailing bramble, and there also hung a daughter of earth. Her face was shaded by a brown straw hat with a flexible brim that left her lips and chin in the sun, and, sometimes nodding, sent forth a light of promising eyes. Across her shoulders, and behind, flowed large loose curls, brown in shadow, almost golden where the ray touched them. On a closer inspection you might see that her lips were stained. This blooming young person was regaling on dewberries. They grew between the bank and the water. Apparently she found the fruit abundant for her hand was making pretty progress to her mouth. . . . The little skylark went up above her, all song, to the smooth southern cloud lying along the blue: from a dewy copse dark over her nodding hat the blackbird fluted, calling to her with thrice mellow note; the kingfisher flashed emerald out of green osiers; a bow-winged heron travelled aloft, seeking solitude; a boat slipped towards her containing a dreamy youth; and still she plucked the fruit and ate, and mused, as if no fairy prince were invading her territory, and as if she wished not for one, or knew not her wishes.

Surrounded by the green shaven meadows, the pastoral summer buzz, the weir-fall's thundering white, amid the breath and beauty of wild flowers,

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she was a bit of lovely human life in a fair setting; a terrible attraction. Her posture was so graceful, that though he was making straight for the weir, he dared not dip a scull. Just then one enticing dewberry caught her eyes.

He was floating by unheeded, and saw that her hand stretched low, and could not gather what it sought. A stroke from his right brought him beside her. The damsel glanced up dismayed, and her whole shape trembled over the brink. . . . She was indeed sweetly fair, and would have been held fair among rival damsels. The soft rose in her cheeks, the clearness of her eyes, bore witness to the body's virtue; and health and happy blood were in her bearing. The wide summer hat, nodding over her forehead to her brows, seemed to flow with the flowing heavy curls, and those fire-threaded mellow curls, only half-curls, waves of hair call them, rippling at the ends, went like a sunny red-veined torrent down her back almost to her waist: a glorious vision to the youth, who embraced it as a flower of beauty, and read not a feature. There were curious features of colour in her face for him to have read. Her brows, thick and brownish against a soft skin showing the action of the blood, met in the bend of a bow, extending to the temples long and level: you saw that she was fashioned to pursue the sights of earth, and by the pliability of her brows that the wonderful creature used her faculty, and was not going to be a statue or a gazer. Under the dark thick brows an arch of lashes shot out, giving a wealth of darkness to the full

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has come I wonder at myself. . . . Her eyes at least were beautiful, they were unusually far apart, and let you look straight into them and never quivered, they were such clear, gray, searching eyes, they seemed always to be asking for the truth. And she had an adorable mouth. In repose it was perhaps hard because it shut so decisively, but often it screwed up provokingly on one side, as when she smiled or was sorry or for no particular reason. . . . At those moments the essence of all that was characteristic and delicious about her seemed to have run into her mouth. . . .

She had a quaint way of nodding her head at you when she was talking; it made you forget what she was saying, though it was really meant to have precisely the opposite effect. . . . There were times when she looked like a boy. Her almost gallant bearing, the poise of her head, her noble frankness, they all had in them something of a princely boy who has never known fear.

J. M. Barrie

RIMA, THE FOREST GIRL

IT was a human being—a girl form, reclining on the moss among the ferns, near the roots of a small tree. One arm was doubled behind her neck for her head to rest upon, while the other arm was held extended before her, the hand raised towards a small brown bird perched on a pendulous twig just beyond its reach. . . . From my position it

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was impossible to see her distinctly, yet I dared not move.

I could make out that she was small, not above four feet seven in height, in figure slim, with delicately shaped little hands and feet. Her feet were bare. Her hair was very wonderful; it was loose and abundant, falling in a cloud on her shoulders and arms. Dark it appeared, but the precise tint was indeterminable, as was that of her skin, which looked neither brown nor white. Altogether, near me as she actually was, there was a kind of mistiness in the figure which made it appear somewhat vague and distant, and a greenish grey seemed the prevailing colour. This tint I presently attributed to the effect of the sunlight falling on her through the green foliage; for once for a moment, she raised herself nearer to the bird, and then a gleam of un-subdued sunlight fell on her hair and arm, and the arm at that moment appeared of a pearly whiteness, and the hair, just where the light touched it, had a strange lustre and play of iridescent colour . . . her eyes, wide open, with a surprised look in them, remained immovably fixed on my face. And then slowly, imperceptibly—for I did not notice the actual movement, so gradual and smooth it was, like the motion of a cloud of mist which changes its form and place, yet to the eye seems not to have moved—she rose to her knees, to her feet, retired, and with face still towards me, and eyes fixed on mine, finally disappeared, going as if the hair melted away into the veriture. . . . So vivid was the image left on my brain that this still seemed to

She walks in Beauty

be actually before my eyes; and she was not there, nor had been, for it was a dream, an illusion, and no such being existed, or could exist, in this gross world: and at the same time I knew that she had been there—that imagination was powerless to conjure up a form so exquisite. . . . I was standing at her side, gazing down with the utmost delight into that face which so greatly surpassed in loveliness all faces I had ever seen or imagined. . . . And yet to you it probably will not seem that she was so beautiful, since I have, alas! only the words we all use to paint, coarser, commoner things, and no means to represent all the exquisite details, all the delicate lights, and shades, and swift changes of colour and expression. . . . Her figure and features were singularly delicate, but it was her colour that struck me most, which indeed made her differ from all other human beings. The colour of the skin would be almost impossible to describe, so greatly did it vary with every change of mood—and the moods were many and transient—and with the angle on which the sunlight touched it, and the degree of light.

Beneath the trees, at a distance, it had seemed a somewhat dim white or pale grey . . . at any point where the rays fell direct the underlying rose-colour was bright and luminous, as we see in our fingers when held before a strong firelight. With the skin the colour of the eyes harmonised perfectly . . . think only of such a hue, in the half-hidden iris, brilliant and moist with the eye's moisture, deep with the eye's depth, glorified by

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the outward look of a bright, beautiful soul. Most variable of all in colour was the hair, this being due to its extreme fineness and glossiness, and to its elasticity, which made it lie fleecy and loose on head, shoulders and back; a cloud with a brightness on its surface, a fit setting and crown for a countenance of such rare, changeful loveliness. . . . So changeful was it and ethereal in appearance with its cloud colours, that all other human hair, even of the most beautiful golden shades, pale or red, seemed heavy and dull and dead-looking by comparison.

But more than form and colour and that enchanting variability was the look of intelligence, which at the same time seemed complementary to and one with the all-seeing, all-hearing alertness appearing in her face; the alertness one remarks in a wild creature, even when in repose and fearing nothing; but seldom in man, never perhaps in intellectual or studious man. . . . Why had Nature not done this before—why in all others does the brightness of the mind dim that beautiful physical brightness which the wild animals have? . . .

She was now as immovable as an alabaster statue; not a silken hair on her head trembled; her eyes were wide open, gazing fixedly before her; and when I looked at them they seemed to see and yet not to see me. They were like the clear, brilliant eyes of a bird, which reflect as in a miraculous mirror all the visible world but do not return our look, and seem to see us merely as one of the thousand small details that make up the whole

She walks in Beauty

picture. . . . All the separate and fragmentary beauty and melody and graceful motion found scattered throughout nature were concentrated and harmoniously combined in her. How various, how luminous, how divine she was! . . . her half-closed eyes turned to mine expressed a tender assured happiness—the chastened gladness of sunshine after rain; a soft delicious langour that was partly passionate with the passion etherealised. . . .

Alas! this bright being, like no other in its divine brightness, so long in the making, now no more than a dead leaf, a little dust, lost and forgotten for ever.—O pitiless! O cruel!

W. H. Hudson

DOÑA RITA

THE woman of whom I had heard so much, in a sort of way in which I had never heard a woman spoken of before, was coming down the stairs, and my first sensation was that of profound astonishment at this evidence that she really did exist. And even then the visual impression was more of colour in a picture than of the forms of actual life. She was wearing a wrapper, a sort of dressing-gown of pale blue silk embroidered with black and gold designs round the neck and down the front, lapped round her and held together by a broad belt of the same material. Her slippers were of the same material with black bows at the instep. The white stairs, the deep crimson of the carpet, and the light blue of the dress made an effective combination of colour

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to set off the delicate carnation of that face, which, after the first glance given to the whole person, drew irresistibly your gaze to itself by an indefinable quality of charm beyond all analysis and made you think of remote races, of strange generations, of the faces of women sculptured on immemorial monuments and of those lying unsung in their tombs. While she moved downwards from step to step with slightly lowered eyes there flashed upon me suddenly the recollection of words heard at night, of Allegre's words about her, of there being in her "something of the women of all time". . . .

I gazed at Doña Rita's profile, irregular, animated, and fascinating in an indefinable way, at her well-shaped head with the hair twisted high up and apparently held in place by a gold arrow with a jewelled shaft—the movement of her lips and the play of her features were full of charm, full of interest, expressing both audacity and gentleness. . . .

In the fullness of its life her face preserved a sort of immobility. The words seemed to form themselves, fiery or pathetic, in the air, outside her lips. Their design was hardly disturbed; a design of sweetness, gravity, and force as if born from the inspiration of some artist; for I had never seen anything to come up to it in nature before or since. . . .

Her uncovered neck was round like the shaft of a column. That day she carried no barbarous arrow in her hair. It was parted on one side, brushed back severely, and tied with a black ribbon, without any

She walks in Beauty

bronze mist about her forehead or temple. This smoothness added to the many varieties of her expression also that of child-like innocence. . . .

The last of the light gleamed in her long enigmatic eyes as if they were precious enamel in that shadowy head which in its immobility suggested a creation of a distant past: immortal art not transient life.

Joseph Conrad, 1857-1925

THE PRINCESS CASAMASSIMA

SHE might well be a princess—it was impossible to conform more to the finest evocations of that romantic word. She was fair, shining, slender, with an effortless majesty. Her beauty had an air of perfection; it astonished and lifted one up; the sight of it seemed a privilege, a reward. Her dark eyes, blue or grey, something that was not brown, were as kind as they were splendid, and there was an extraordinary light nobleness in the way she held her head. That head, where two or three diamond stars glittered in the thick, delicate hair which defined its shape, suggested something antique and celebrated, something he had admired of old—the memory was vague—in a statue, in a picture, in a museum. Purity of line and form, of cheek and chin and lip and brow, a colour that seemed to live and glow, a radiance of grace and eminence and success—these things were seated in triumph in the face of the Princess, and her visitor, as he held

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himself in his chair, trembling with the revelation, questioned if she were really of the same substance with the humanity he had hitherto known.

Henry James, 1843-1916

THE STRANGER

SHE looked rather taller than she actually was, maybe because the faded blue dress she wore with its full skirts fell to her ankles. Her face was long and narrow, with high cheekbones; her hair, smooth and parted in the middle, was of a dull gold and tied in a knot at the neck. Beneath it, over blue eyes steadfastly fixed on mine, arched unusually dark eyebrows. These, too, and her eyelashes had a little gold in their dark, like that of her hair. . . .

I seemed to be gazing at her far rather as though she were a work of art than one of nature--the tiny arch of her lip, the curve of her nostril, the line of eyelid and temple, the sheen of her eyelashes. . . .

No portrait I have ever seen bears comparison in memory with that solitary figure. . . .

She walks in Beauty

plored, analysed. . . . I see as I write the troubled simplicity that lightened her face as she spoke. The very ghost of childhood returned into it. Her own small daughter, if she had ever had one, might have looked like that—the young moon in the old moon's arms.

Walter de la Mare

CHARLOTTE STANT

WHAT he saw was a tall strong charming girl who wore for him at first exactly the air of her adventurous situation, a reference in all her person, in motion and gesture, in free vivid yet altogether happy indications of dress, to winds and waves and custom-houses, to far countries and long journeys, the knowledge of how and where and the habit founded on experience, of not being afraid. . . . Making use then of clumsy terms of excess, the face was too narrow and too long, the eyes not large, and the mouth by no means small with substance in its lips. . . . But it was, strangely, as a cluster of possessions of his own that these things in Charlotte Stant now affected him; items in a full list, items recognised, each of them, as if, for the long interval, they had been "stored"—wrapped up, numbered, put away in a cabinet. . . . He saw again that her thick hair was, vulgarly speaking, brown, but that there was a shade of tawny autumn leaf in it—a colour indescribable and of which he had known no other case, something that gave her at moments the sylvan head of a huntress. He saw

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the sleeves of her jacket drawn to the wrists, but he again made out the free arms within them to be of the completely rounded, the polished slimness that Florentine sculptors in the great time had loved and of which the apparent firmness is expressed in their old silver and old bronze. He knew her narrow hands, he knew her long fingers and the shape and colour of her finger-nails, he knew her special beauty of movement and line when she turned her back, and the perfect working of all her main attachments, that of some wonderful finished instrument, something intently made for exhibition, for a prize. He knew above all the extraordinary fineness of her flexible waist, the stem of an expanded flower, which gave her a likeness also to some long loose silk purse, well filled with gold-pieces, but having been passed empty through a finger-ring that held it together. . . . If when she moved off she looked like a huntress, she looked when she came nearer like his notion, perhaps not wholly correct, of a muse.

Henry James, 1843-1916

She walks in Beauty

slight slim draped "antique" of Vatican or Capitoline halls, late and refined, rare as a note and immortal as a link, set in motion by the miraculous infusion of a modern impulse and yet, for all the sudden freedom of folds and footsteps forsaken after centuries by their pedestal, keeping still the quality, the perfect felicity, of the statue; the blurred absent eyes, the smoothed elegant nameless head, the impersonal flit of a creature lost in an alien age and passing as an image in worn relief round and round a precious vase. She had always had moments of striking him, as a figure thus simplified, "generalised" in its grace, a figure with which his human connection was interrupted by some vague analogy of turn and attitude, something shyly mythological and nymph-like.

Henry James, 1843-1916

MADAME VIONNET

HER bare shoulders and arms were white and beautiful; the materials of her dress, a mixture, as he supposed, of silk and crêpe, were of a silvery grey so artfully composed as to give an impression of warm splendour; and round her neck she wore a collar of large old emeralds, the green note of which was more dimly repeated, at the points of her apparel, in embroidery, in enamel, in satin, in substances and texture vaguely rich. Her head, extremely fair and exquisitely festal, was like a happy fancy, a notion of the antique, on an old precious medal, some silver coin of the Renaissance;

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while her slim lightness and brightness, her gaiety, her expression; her decision, contributed to an effect that might have been felt by a poet as half mythological and half conventional. He could have compared her to a goddess still partly engaged in a morning cloud, or to a sea-nymph waist-high in the summer surge.

Henry James, 1843-1916

VERENA TARRANT

VERENA TARRANT had curious, radiant, liquid eyes (their smile was a sort of reflection, like the glisten of a gem), and though she was not tall, she appeared to spring up, and carried her head as if it reached rather high. Her splendid hair seemed to shine; her cheek and chin had a curve which struck him by its fineness; her eyes and lips were full of smiles and greetings. She had appeared to him before as a creature of brightness, but now she lighted up the place, she irradiated, she made everything that surrounded her of no consequence; dropping upon the shabby sofa with an effect as charming as if she had been a nymph sinking on a leopard skin.

She walks in Beauty

in a Frankfort gallery, painted in pale tints, the cheeks faintly touched with carmine. In the background of these pictures there are all sorts of curious things; very often a gold bower with roses clambering up everywhere.

Who was that master who painted cunning virgins in rose bowers? Doris's hair was darker than the hair of those virgins in rose bowers, a rich gold hair, a mane of hair growing as luxuriously as the meadows in June. And the golden note was continued everywhere, in the eyebrows, in the pupils of the eyes, in the freckles along her little nose so firmly and beautifully modelled about the nostrils; never was there a more lovely or affectionate mouth, weak and beautiful as a flower; and the long hands were curved like lilies. There is her portrait, prettily and truthfully painted by me.

George Moore, 1853-1933

MAID IN WAITING

DINNY was slight and rather tall; she had hair the colour of chestnuts, an imperfect nose, a Botticellian mouth, eyes cornflower blue and very widely set, and a look rather of a flower on a long stalk that might easily be broken off, but never was. Her expression suggested that she went through life trying not to see it as a joke. She was, in fact, like one of those natural wells, or springs, whence one cannot procure water without bubbles.

Galsworthy, 1867-1933

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ZULEIKA DOBSON

ZULEIKA was not strictly beautiful. Her eyes were a trifle large, and their lashes longer than they need have been. An anarchy of small curls was her chevelure, a dark upland of misrule, every hair asserting its rights over a not discreditable brow. For the rest, her features were not at all original. They seem to have been derived rather from a gallimaufry of familiar models. From Madame la Marquise de Saint-Ouen came the shapely tilt of the nose. The mouth was a mere replica of Cupid's bow, lacquered scarlet and strung with the littlest pearls. No apple-tree, no wall of peaches, had not been robbed, nor any Tyrian rose-garden, for the glory of Miss Dobson's cheeks. Her neck was imitation marble. Her hands and feet were of very mean proportions. She had no waist to speak of.

Max Beerbohm

MRS. RAMSAY

... And all at once he realised that it was this: it was this:—she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen. With stars in her eyes and veils in her hair, with cyclamen and wild violets—what nonsense was he thinking? She was fifty at least; she had eight children. Stepping through fields of flowers and taking to her breast buds that had broken and lambs that had fallen; with the stars in her eyes and the wind in her hair. . . .

"But she's no more aware of her beauty than a child." For always, he thought, there was some-

She walks in Beauty

thing incongruous to be worked into the harmony of her face. She clapped a deer-stalker's hat on her head; she ran across the lawn in goloshes to snatch a child from mischief. So that if it was her beauty merely that one thought of, one must remember the quivering thing, the living thing, and work it into the picture; or if one thought of her simply as a woman, one must endow her with some freak of idiosyncrasy; or suppose some latent desire to doff her royalty of form as if her beauty bored her and all that men say of beauty, and she wanted only to be like other people, insignificant.

Virginia Woolf

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